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Law and the Cross

C. F. CREIGHTON



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LAW AND THE CROSS

THE LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE ATONEMENT
VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF THE
COMMON SENSE OF MANKIND.

By

C. F. CREIGHTON, D. D., LL. D.



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“Just and the Justifier.”

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Preface.

THEOLOGY as a recreation affords a field as inviting and varied as the physical sciences; and no naturalist ever took more delight in some chosen department than the author in the study of the legal aspects of the atonement.

If this interest can be transferred to any of the readers of this book, the task of writing it will be amply rewarded.

The thoughts here presented are the product of a study that began when the author was a student, fresh from college and from some study of the law.

The science of theology brought its problems. Chief among them was “the atonement;” and most difficult of all the questions raised was the primary question of “necessity.”

On the reply to that question hangs not only the theory adopted, but in logical sequence the mental attitude toward all the doctrines of the New Testament. A problem of such vital concern, demanding solution at such a time, can not

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be evaded or laid aside as inscrutable. The solution will either be fatal to an evangelical faith or furnish it with an inspiration for life.

The logical harmony found to exist between the legal principles involved, and the philosophy of the atonement as stated and expounded by the greatest of theologians—St. Paul—will afford the answer.

In the case of the writer, a key to this problem was discovered in the study of Blackstone. The problem of pardons as there explained was afterwards confirmed by every legal authority consulted, and the legal principles involved were found to apply to some phases of moral government; notably to the pardon of sin. Thus the study led to the frequent presentation of this theme.

The “Legal Aspects of the Atonement,” addressed to ministers and lawyers, to students and professors, at college and law schools, has elicited information, provoked criticism, and subjected the argument to analysis.

Frequent and sometimes formal requests have been made for its publication, and it is herewith presented (though with some diffidence), in the hope that it will bring the subject to the attention of thinking men anew, and aid thoughtful

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students in the solution of some of their theological problems.

The proffer of a book on the atonement, by a pastor, in this critical age, when theology is reduced to an exact science, seems an intrusion; the author, apparently knowing so much less than other men, presumes to know more than the able and scholarly theologians whose works are accessible to those interested in the subject. Our defense, in part at least, is in the fact that every prophet and every preacher has his message. And it is part of ours to remove illogical objections that stand in the way of a rational assent to the truth of the gospel of "Christ and Him crucified."

Further, it will be seen that a treatise on the atonement in any scientific sense is not attempted, and we neither offer a permanent contribution to Systematic Theology nor a "new theory of the atonement:" but rather some thoughts on the subject designed to correct misconceptions and clear the approaches to a better understanding both of the New Testament truth and the "theories" of atonement as found in the standard works and advocated by able theologians. The book is not exhaustive in any sense, treating chiefly the "question of necessity," from the standpoint, first, of New Testament authority, and second, of the legal

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and moral principles involved in any true theory of the redemptive work of Christ. The application of these principles requires a study of the theories of atonement usually taught, and some attention is given to them. An adequate theological treatment would render the book a text, for study or reference only, and give it little interest to a general reader. We have preferred to combine with the argument such a presentation of the theories as may be necessary, and yet admit excursions into fields that open by the way, and thus secure the interest which attaches to any readable book, in the hope that it will not prove to be a "dry subject." To men who will not think, and to whom the atonement has no attraction, we commend a book on some "new religion," as that belongs to the realm of fiction and is therefore popular. An accurate theological treatment of the doctrine of the atonement would require a history of its development from the early centuries and a summary of the views of theologians at the present time. But in view of the fact that words and terms have come to have such technical meaning, it would be difficult to write a summary that would express the truth with precision and the proper emphasis. It would require a book; while for our purpose merely an

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outline is desired, and one that will present in brief the salient features of the most prominent theories as they are found in the standards of theology.

For the matter of the book and the argument it contains (except as credited) the responsibility is not shared by another. The author again disclaims any attempt to introduce a new theory of the atonement. If he has added any emphasis to its necessity in the minds of any, he will be glad. To add nothing new to the discussion of a theme would bar its use in print. It has been said that “what the world needs is not new thoughts so much as it needs that the old thoughts be restated” (Mathews, in “Words: Their Use and Abuse”). If, therefore, in this, or in his theology, the author has transgressed, he will gladly welcome any criticism that puts its finger on the place. Mere disparagement, however, is as apt to spring from the bias of a critic as from the contents of a book. In the conclusions reached the only authority to which we hope nearest to conform, and fear to offend, is the New Testament. Which last remark is justified by the statement that “there have been conspicuous examples of essays and even treatises on the atonement, standing in no discoverable relation to the New Testament”

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(James Denney, D. D., "The Death of Christ," Preface, p. v.).

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POSTSCRIPT.—If the critic asks an explanation for "The Common Sense" found in the title, we reply that we expect him to furnish that in reading the book. But, primarily, it expresses a serious purpose to align some things affirmed in the book with the common sense of mankind: To take for granted what men of intelligence accept as reasonable, though proof of it in some cases would require a separate volume. Such as the assumption that the universe is governed according to law; that God has a moral as well as a physical government; that men are personally accountable to God, etc. The title is not, therefore, an apology for some of the strictures incidentally volunteered, nor an appeal to common sense; but rather an approval of its findings, utilized in the discussion of the subject. It is true that the halo of scholastic prestige sometimes covers up fads and fancies which are obscure enough to seem profound, while plain common sense would subject an author to the hazard of being understood: And even in that case the title will not prove a misnomer. "Seeing, then, we have this hope, we use great plainness of speech."

C. F. C.

CHAPTER I

Introduction.

THE LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE ATONEMENT VIEWED
IN THE LIGHT OF THE COMMON SENSE OF MAN-
KIND. A STUDY OF FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES
INVOLVED IN REDEMPTION.

GREAT verities give rise to great problems. Some of these, either from a lack of necessary data or our finite limitations, are inscrutable; others of like interest will yield to our thinking.

But any thing worthy the name of a problem requires close thought. The doctrine of the atonement presents problems of both kinds. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are My ways your ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8, 9). Hence we need not be surprised if the divine method of saving men should be inexplicable to us, unless by some inspired authority it should be announced and explained. Presuming this, in view of the possible nature of that method, it is yet probable that it would give rise to problems that would com-

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mand the highest powers of thinking men. Certainly it would not commend itself to the understanding and approval of all men; and yet, if its provisions embraced all men, and any part of it should require their approval and co-operation, it is very probable that questions relating to their duty and privilege would be brought within the compass of their understanding.

Happily for us this is true; and the atonement presents every aspect suggested by these premises. God has ordained a redemptive method. It has been proclaimed. Holy men, divinely instructed, have "made known the mystery of the gospel" (Eph. 1:9 and 6:19). On this subject there can be but one authority. Sources of information and means of instruction may be many; but first and last, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments must afford the texts and the "try square" of what the atonement is and what it is designed to secure. Unless we accept the authority of the Holy Scriptures for our doctrine of the atonement we have no problem.

All our labor in this presentation will assume that authority, and hence we are confronted with the questions and difficulties growing out of that assumption. If "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures"—1 Cor. 15:3—we may pro-

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ceed logically to construct a theory of the atonement. But if not, and we reject the New Testament authority, a theory of the atonement is logically irrelevant. Questions that otherwise confront us would disappear, and the “problem” would be solved by the elimination of its premises. It is true that the historic facts would remain and an explanation of these might warrant a doctrinal atonement hypothetically; but the same objections would not lie against such doctrine, nor could the same authority be pleaded in its defense, even though it be designated by similar terms and phrases. The problem we have chosen to discuss consists in meeting difficulties growing out of an acceptance of the New Testament as unqualified authority on the doctrine of the atonement. If we succeed it will help to confirm that choice, but if not, the fact of the atonement remains, and the responsibility rests upon higher authority than ours; peradventure above our capacity to understand it or our caprice in accepting or rejecting it.

The atonement itself is not a subject of such mystery that a rational explanation is impossible. Nor is it necessarily a difficult problem until we come to reconcile the facts and the philosophy of the atonement with all the doctrines of a theo-

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logical system. A “theory” is not merely a statement of the facts and their philosophy. It is, first, a statement intended to include the facts and declare what the atonement is and is not; second, the philosophy of the atonement; third, the doctrine made to harmonize with a theological system.

This accounts in large measure for the differences between the theories advocated by learned and able theologians. True, the divine method of redemption is itself “a mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations,” but “it is now revealed unto us,” and the fact of atonement may be reduced to terms easily understood, while its philosophy and theological construction may and does require perfect consilience in any doctrinal system of which it forms a part.

The question of necessity, *i. e.*, why was an atonement necessary to the pardon of sin, leads to the treatment of every phase of redemption, but, primarily, an answer to that question sufficiently clear and abundantly satisfactory does not belong to the realm of mystery and is possible to the comprehension of the humblest student. For instance, St. Paul affirms that “Christ Jesus was set forth to be a propitiation to declare His righteousness, that God might be just and the

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"Justifier" (Rom. 3:24). The reason here given is not incomprehensible. An atonement was necessary to the pardon of sin that God might be just and extend the clemency of pardon to sinners: So that his explanation deals with principles that are familiar to us, and a study of this Pauline answer does not require that we understand the philosophy of the atonement any further than it is included in the legal terms employed.

While phases of the divine method rise to the unsearchable, an intelligent appreciation of the requirements of moral government and the legal barriers that forbid the exercise of pardon is all that is required to understand the conditions which made an atonement of some kind a provisional necessity.

All the reasons which render the exercise of pardon inexpedient or impossible without some recognition of the fact of sin, and which require that pardon be extended in harmony with all the principles involved in moral government belong to the answer: And an answer that will satisfy an unbiased thinker is less determined by "a knowledge of all mystery" than by a willingness to credit truth within the reach of one in search of it. Certainly there are heights and depths in the philosophy of redemption that give range for

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angelic penetration (1 Pet. 1:12), and a theory of the atonement too easily comprehended may well be suspected; but we do well to distinguish between the plain and the mysterious lest we veil the whole in confusion and relegate the most useful and inspiring truths to the realm of neglect and deny ourselves the light of an intelligent faith.

This habit is all too common, and there are not wanting those who scoff at a “theory of the atonement,” whose lack of study and smattering of truth has given them a theory as crude and confused as their treatment of the whole subject; their reason for the need of an atonement being summed up in the statement that it was necessary or it would not have been provided. Such is not the New Testament answer, and it is not convincing to a thinker. (Nor does it comport with the advice of an apostle, to “be always ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason,” etc.)

The unique character of the gospel of Christ presents both qualities of a magnet: It attracts and it repels. Commanding our faith and obedience on the ground of authority, it is but natural that it awakens protest. Not only is the human heart disposed to be released from moral obligations, but the mind elects to challenge truth before the

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judgment is surrendered to its claims: Hence gospel truth is subjected to greater tests and provokes keener criticism than either truth in the abstract or truth systematized in scientific form. The historic basis, the facts, the doctrines, and the moral precepts of Christianity have provoked the most violent protests. It has been said that the cross found an enemy in every human heart. It has been subjected to the assaults of learning and wit and ridicule and depravity from age to age. After all, the only way that Christianity has ever been hurt has been by means of substitution. The most destructive method, both yesterday and to-day, and perhaps forever, is one that assumes to speak in its name and then substitutes something so much better(?) that it is really something else.

When men rebelled against ecclesiasticism and demanded for themselves the right to think, their quarrel included not only the institutional body, but the doctrinal soul of the Church. With an open Bible and the almost universal knowledge of it that pervades society to-day, we are not capable of appreciating the dense ignorance of a period which was preceded by a thousand years of darkness during which the Bible was proscribed and the preaching of the gospel, "instead of being

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a constant custom, was rare and exceptional during the long period between the sixth and the sixteenth centuries" (see McClintock & Strong, "An Instructive Article on Preaching"). With Christianity thus viewed through a distorted medium, its doctrines corrupted and caricatured, it was not strange that thinking men should become skeptics, and in a literary age that followed should flood the world with the literature of infidelity. Nor is it any more surprising that reformers in their construction of theological formula should incorporate exaggerated notions of certain attributes of Deity and the divine decrees and thus give occasion to further revolt.

It would be too much to say that the conditions of to-day are in any sense parallel with those to which we refer; and yet causes deeply rooted as some found in the Middle Ages, and tendencies as fatal to the truth, can be traced to the closing years of the nineteenth century, the effects of which may not be measured until the closing years of another century. Most men get their knowledge of Christianity and their impressions of theology, not from reading the Bible, but from tradition. They imbibe the spirit of the age in which they live. They would spurn the authority of an ecclesiastical institution, but bow to the prestige

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of popular opinion. Thus with the vital doctrines of the New Testament, as modified by these surroundings, and formulated by critics and opponents, they come to know evangelical Christianity as a caricature. Men hold certain opinions, the product of their observation and experience, and any doctrine which is evidently at variance with their views of truth and reason are at once discarded as untenable, without so much as the trouble of an investigation.

It takes but little distortion to invalidate a truth, and when that truth is part of a system which is itself little understood and subjected to the world-wide animadversions of opponents, is it any wonder that busy men are misinformed and led to believe that it has lost its edge and that the evangelical system is untenable “in an age of progress?”

No truth in the New Testament is more liable to these strictures than the atonement; and with a theory of the atonement which nobody ever taught and no scholar ever believed, always on exhibition in current literature and labeled orthodox, the popular mind is led to think that the “faith of the fathers” was a mixture of mystery and absurdity “no longer tenable in a scientific age.”

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Nor are these conditions altogether to blame. It is really painful to hear a preacher say to his auditors, "I confess I do not understand the atonement." True, it would be more so if the statement was reversed. But in that bald form it is a concession to current unbelief; as if perchance the doctrine of the atonement taught in the New Testament presented difficulties which to a rational mind could not be reconciled to the truth. This implied concession is so palpable that it is usually followed with some meaningless panegyric about the majesty of the cross and the clouds and darkness that cover it.

It puts an advocate of the gospel more in the attitude of Nicodemus coming at night and saying, "How can these things be?" than that of an apostle saying, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Such treatment of the subject is but a contribution to the confused state of which we complain, and which it is the plain duty of the pulpit to enlighten and correct. It is true that popular conceptions may contain a residue of value; even a body of saving truth may lodge with some error. Some minds are so constructed that to them an incongruity is but a trifle. Their theology is the product of their environment, and the sum of the influences

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to which they have yielded an assent, whether of faith or unbelief. They could believe in the divinity of Christ “if he was mistaken.” They could reject a vicarious atonement, subscribe to an orthodox creed, and continue the same devotion to the Scriptures while “holding moderate views” without a suspicion of inconsistency. Dear souls, the trouble is organic; it belongs rather to the realm of psychology than that of systematic theology.

But there is a class of minds in search of the truth so constructed that they can not be satisfied without knowing just where they are. If such an one is a student of theology and he has taken the New Testament for his authority he will lodge on the first “trifling incongruity” and refuse to go further until he can find a logical way through. Hence with such the atonement becomes a problem, and its solution waits on more light; which if it is found will reward the effort with a conclusion that will not only harmonize with all its parts, but can be proved by its perfect adjustment to every truth revealed in the Word of God: That is systematic theology.

Whether we define the atonement as vicarious and render the New Testament terms to conform with the facts, or whether we begin with

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a conception foreign to the Scriptures, we do not escape the necessity of making our theory of atonement conform to the theological system we adopt.

The atonement concept is relative. It is one side of a triangle; co-ordinating with sin and salvation as the other two sides.

The figure may be enlarged to any number of sides, but the relativity of the atonement concept remains the same, and when the whole figure is perfected it will either correspond to that of the New Testament or it will differ throughout. (That is, provided it is logical.) The theologian can not cull out the atonement, and in definition divest it of every feature of propitiation and retain at the same time a vestige of his orthodoxy. Unless his theological ground is ‘Liberalistic,’ which in perfect logical consistency carries with it all the evangelical doctrines of the New Testament, his “theory of atonement” is not theological. The same logic that requires a “rationalistic” atonement requires a “rational” New Testament. Consilience requires it. A theology that partakes of both Liberalism and Orthodoxy is a psychological wonder.

Before we start with our problem, then, we must make sure of our ground, and thus deter-

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mine where we are and anticipate somewhat where we are to come out.

If we begin by renouncing the authority of the New Testament we will be at liberty to range the fields of fact and philosophy and find a theory that would fit into nothing but a system agreeable to whatever place we might assign to the New Testament. But if we credit that authority we are limited to it, and we must find a theory of atonement that will harmonize with everything that comes under the same New Testament authority. We must be logical if we would be theological.

The Bible is a great book and it requires great assurance to antagonize it, in toto: But it does not seem to occur to some minds that consistency requires either its primacy as an authority or a complete divorce from its theology. An atonement that is part liberalistic and part evangelical belongs neither to the New Testament nor to a system of theology.

This is psychology applied to philosophy: And therefore we announce first of all our adherence to the authority of the Scriptures; our theory of the atonement of Christ to be evangelical, and our problem to be one that will face questions growing out of these premises. First, Why was an atonement necessary?

CHAPTER II

LAW. MORAL GOVERNMENT IMPLIED. MORAL ORDER BROKEN. NO REMEDY.

THERE are some truths so far from the domain of ordinary thinking that they are known to but few. They are like the distant nebulae which only come to be seen after long exposure of the sensitive plate to the rays of light that have crossed the depths of space. There are other truths which are noetic. They are found written in the very constitution of man, and if not innate they are at least intuitional: Or possibly, the logistic process by which they are discovered is so rapid that we do not discover the mode of induction or deduction. Such truths are common to all men, affording evidence of the light with which we are dowered.

Then there are themes of thought which if pursued in any relevant direction will open fields of discovery to any thinker, however commonplace some of the premises with which he begins. Sometimes the route will be circuitous, as when

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we ascend a mountain, but the ascent must be easy and gradual up to the more rugged heights where the outlook will open a landscape that will repay the toil of such an effort.

The atonement is just such a theme. No one phase of it can be apprehended without reference to its place in the whole system, and that will require some attention to details and a study of the approaches. It is not so important where we begin; but we must begin with a determination to pursue the subject to a just and comprehensive view of its relation to the whole system of divine revelation. We choose to begin with law, and with some very commonplace statements which the common sense of mankind will approve.

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In all ages the common sense of mankind, and the judgment of the master minds, have agreed in affirming the universal supremacy of law. There is something sublime in the thought of its eternity, its universality, and its imperial majesty. In nature its uniformity of consequences, and in government its obligations and penalties—all according to some rule of action.

For, says Blackstone, “law signifies a rule of action, and is applied indiscriminately to all kinds

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of action, whether animate or inanimate, rational or irrational.”

From any standpoint it may be defined, law is a rule. Said Burke, “law is beneficence acting by rule.” A definition which will suit our purpose and cover all the principles for which we contend in our later pages is as follows, viz.: LAW IS A RULE OF ACTION PRESCRIBED BY A SUPERIOR POWER WHICH THE INFERIOR IS BOUND TO OBEY OR SUFFER THE PENALTIES OF DISOBEDIENCE.

ACTION UNDER LAW IMPLIES GOVERNMENT.

Government is of two kinds, physical government and moral government. Physical government is the control of substance and its attributes by necessity or force, in contradistinction to free will. Moral government, which declares and administers moral law, is the control of free beings by motives rather than by force.

The common sense of mankind and the judgment of the best thinkers agree in affirming that God has a physical government, and that He has a moral government. Most intelligent men, not educated to a philosophy that has lost its moorings, believe that God who has written His existence on all His works, has likewise written personal accountability to moral law upon the hearts

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of all His intelligent creatures. It was a great thinker who said, "The greatest thought I ever had was in the contemplation of endless space and my personal accountability to God."¹ A thought which belongs to the humblest stevedore and to the greatest statesman; and without which anarchy would usurp the place of government. It is this sense of personal accountability which secures life and property, and when it ceases to reign in any political division of the world a "reign of terror" follows. All the bulwarks of civil and religious liberty, such as constitutions and statutes, would be as powerless to stem the tide as the thin curtain that hides the sanctity of private life and domestic virtue. It only needs to be associated with ideals of socialism and democracy to render it perilous. Therefore, while we do not intend to discuss modern philosophy, monism, pluralism, or dualistic theism, we do affirm that any philosophy which when reduced to practice would corrupt the mind of a child or render man dangerous to the social order can not be true.²

¹Attributed in substance to both Webster and Goethe.

²Among the things deprecated by Prof. William James, in his "Pluralistic Universe," page 29, is: "The theological machinery which spoke of its juridical morality and eschatology, its treatment of God as an external contriver, an intelligent and moral governor," etc. The learned professor avers that the thought of a past generation seems "as foreign to its successor as if it were the expression of a different race of men." "As odd as if it were some outlandish savage religion."

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Denial of the fact of a moral government, in which men are free responsible agents, ignores the fact that the laws of universal being chord with righteousness; ignores the moral consciousness and its relation to universal benevolence, but fortunately for the peace of society the common sense of mankind is arrayed against it. The existence of a Supreme Being and creatures endowed with the prerogatives of choice between right and wrong, implies and necessitates moral government. Their existence and the character of their endowments and interests gives rise to obligations and duties, and hence to law and to government. Moral government, which declares and administers law in harmony with the character and interests of the Supreme Being and His free responsible creatures, commanding what is right and condemning what is wrong, with all that is implied by such

The only error here is one of application. It is true of the "History of Philosophy." Every generation of philosophers repudiates the work of its predecessors; and what assurance have we that the next generation will adopt the Pluralism of this? From Thales to Professor James nothing has stood more than a generation that has contradicted the Scriptures and the common sense of mankind. Our fathers and the "savages" who built our universities to advance Christian learning, and their fathers clear back to those old sheepskin wearers of the eleventh of Hebrews, "who THROUGH FAITH subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouth of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens, and others that had trial of cruel MOCKINGS," still have their followers, and the same old "theological machinery" "with its juridical morality and eschatology" turns out its grist of saints FROM AGE TO AGE.

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general terms, is the only guarantee of an eternal moral order.

Law is not a thing; either in physical or in moral government. It is a rule of action growing out of the nature of beings and things, and the relation they sustain to each other and to the order and constitution of nature. Hence right or righteousness is not a thing, or a something made right or righteous because God wills it and commands it. God commands it because it is right or righteous. Conceptually at least, righteousness grows out of the nature of beings and the relation of things; and God wills it and commands it because He is a righteous God. There is, therefore—there must be—an eternal moral order: God, law, government, order. And were this all, there would be no discord, no wrecks, and no moral evil. But to the entity of being we have the endowment of freedom of choice, which makes possible both virtue and vice: And in the history of moral government we are confronted with the fact that the eternal moral order has been interrupted. Law has been broken. We face the great, dark problem which has been called “the problem of evil.” Natural evil and moral evil.³

³For discussion of this problem, with distinction between natural evil, which is the product of cause and effect, and moral evil, which is the product of law broken, see later pages.

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Moral evil is the result of law broken; signified by that little cosmic word, SIN.

True, some philosophers deny the fact of sin; but the common sense of mankind, and most of the best thinkers, looking back over the wreck-strewn route of human history, are of the opinion that some law has been broken, and the one word that defines the cause of it is the word sin. We are within the limits of our discussion when both the common sense of mankind and the Scriptures confirm the statements made, viz.: The universality and supremacy of law: The fact of a moral government: Moral accountability of free beings: Moral evil the product of disobedience to moral law; that is sin.

THE REMEDY

After these conditions so briefly premised, we come to the problem of a remedy. What is the divine remedy—if any—for this great moral defection in the government of God? Primarily and positively the only remedy which the law can recognize is the execution of the penalty. As a tentative definition of law we stated that “law is a rule of action, prescribed by a superior power, which the inferior is bound to obey or suffer the penalty of disobedience.” Hence if sin is pre-

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mised, the only legal remedy is the execution of the penalty. If it be objected that the penalty, death, can not be a remedy to the guilty, we reply, Certainly not. There is no remedy for the guilty. His only recompense is the forfeiture of life. In the nature of things it can be no less than death, and the law, backed by the omnipotence of all that is behind it, demands the execution of the only penalty known to the record.

Remedies and rights belong not to the guilty, but to the government; to the Supreme Being and His loyal subjects. The problem, then, and one that confronted infinite wisdom, must have been a great problem if the divine purpose was to find a remedy that would apply both to governmental ends and to the guilty alike, without applying the legal remedy, viz., the penalty of death.

For, it must reconcile the remission of penalty to all the legal requirements, and to the restoration of moral order in the government of God. Two great remedies in one, both legal and moral, without violating a principle of righteousness or compromising the character of God or jeopardizing the interests of moral government.

Such a remedy might well be called an atonement! And such is the atonement of the New Testament.

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THE NECESSITY FOR SUCH AN ATONEMENT.

The necessity for such an atonement will be better understood and appreciated by a study of the philosophy of pardons, as exposites by Blackstone and the great jurists of ancient and modern times. Before we enter that field, however, it is well to remind the reader that nature knows no atonement. If we find such an expedient in the moral government of God it will be a miracle: A new creation, and one which does not inhere in the constitution of either physical or moral government; but one that will harmonize with both, and as fully manifest the attributes of God as either. It will not be a contradiction or a compromise or an evasion, but a perfect reconciliation of all the principles involved to the salvation of men and the righteous demands of holy law.

God is just. This one great maxim must stand at the head of all right conceptions of the constitution and the administration of moral government. Justice is personified and enthroned in Him. "Justice and judgment are the habitations of His throne." His government is perfect, and IN A PERFECT GOVERNMENT, PERFECT IN ITS CONSTITUTION AND PERFECT IN ITS ADMINISTRATION, PARDON IS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT AN ATONEMENT.

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That God will condemn vice and approve virtue is assured by the very fact of His righteousness. The essential character of sin suggests such treatment of it as will correspond to its demerit. He will treat sin as it deserves to be treated. Abstractly considered, the principle of justice is as free from any bias, toward mercy on the one hand or cruelty on the other, as an algebraic problem. Protection of the innocent and punishment of the guilty, as the bestowments of justice, are on the same footing; and our view of it will not be correct if it is modified more by the apparent severity of its manifestation in the one case than by the apparent benevolence of its expression in the other. The even poise of its beam must not be disturbed by unequal weights. Justice is righteousness, however exhibited. Justice as an attribute of God is one, and the terms “commutative,” “distributive,” “punitive,” and “public justice,” are employed by moralists to denote the various phases of its application. Justice is said to be punitive when it relates to the punishment of sin according to its deserts. Public justice has reference to government, and is intended to secure a due administration of law for the public good. The ill desert of sin demands the one; the ends of moral government demand the other.

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The divine government is perfect, both in its constitution and its administration; and since the demerit of sin deserves punishment and the ends of moral government require it, the law makes no provision for the remission of sin. If it be just to punish sin, and the interests of moral government would be imperiled without it, any conception of pardon involves a compromise with both. We are aware that this position will provoke dissent, and some readers will not have the patience to consider it. They will reply very plausibly that even "civil governments make provision for pardons. Surely the divine government is more merciful than the human. The idea is preposterous!" If we answer that we must guard against the interpretation of moral law in the light of civil law, it will be truly said, and perhaps with emphasis, that "**THERE ARE CERTAIN GREAT PRINCIPLES OF TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH OBTAIN IN ALL LAW, HUMAN AND DIVINE.**" We accept the statement as wholly true. And while we employ it in our method we insist that the objector stand by it. (For some of the critics will find it uncomfortable.) Is pardon as exhibited in human laws based on one of these great principles of truth and righteousness? Answer, Yes. Pardon is based on Justice. The common idea which regards

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mercy as the basis of pardon is an error; and is not shared by students of law or those familiar with the texts of Blackstone, Walker, Kent, and other jurists. All jurists are agreed on this point. The power of pardon would not exist under a perfect administration of law. The student of law discovers very early in his investigations that the task allotted is the mastery of a science which, apart from constitutions and statutes, is based upon certain principles. These principles—sometimes announced in maxims, sometimes affording the basis of decisions and precedents—giving rise to whatever rule of action, are directly traceable to one common center, namely, that of justice.

The prerogative of pardon, whether lodged with the king, the president, or a body of men representing the executive, is the prerogative of justice. It is a corrective means of justice, and its utility would be lost but for the lack of justice somewhere in the course of law.

JUDGE KENT says, “The admission of the power is a tacit acknowledgment of the infirmity of the course of justice.” All jurists are agreed in the fact that the prerogative of pardon is a corrective measure and intended to be applied only to repair some defect either in the law itself or the administration of justice.

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JUDGE HOADLEY, then the Governor of Ohio, said in his Annual Message (1885): “The power of pardon is a trust conferred upon the Governor to prevent the miscarriage of justice, and not the exercise of mercy or clemency. These words so often used in pardon cases are misapplied.” “The only proper or ordinary grounds for interference with a sentence are, first, either absolute innocence, or relative innocence as shown by a conviction of too high a grade of crime; and second, sentence for too long a term. They are like the cases in which a wise judge will permit a *nolle.*”

WALKER (*American Law*, Lecture VII, Sec. 41) affirms the same principle in these words, “The pardoning power ought to exist somewhere, because criminal justice can never be administered so perfectly that every convict shall deserve to suffer the full and exact sentence which the law announces.” Here again we find the prerogative of pardon to be that of justice, and its purpose corrective.

BLACKSTONE, Vol. I, Par. 269n, is even more explicit, “The king is intrusted with this high prerogative upon special confidence that he will spare those only whose case, could it have been foreseen, the law itself may be presumed willing

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to have excepted out of its general rules, which the wisdom of man can not possibly make so perfect as to suit every particular case.”

We have in this a repetition of the same truth: pardon to be employed as a corrective measure, supplying a lack of justice and applied only where it is deserved. Justice is righteousness, but if laymen prefer to call it mercy we do not object, provided it is made to apply in harmony with justice.

The author above quoted so employs it in definitions of pardon, viz., Vol. II, Bk. iv, Par. 397, “power to extend mercy where it is deserved,” and “in such criminal cases as merit an exemption from punishment.” The term mercy must not be strained to violate the maxim (quoted by Blackstone with approval, Vol. II, Par. 398), “laws can not be framed on principles of compassion to guilt.”

Nor in this sense is equity one thing and justice another. Says JUDGE WALKER (Lect. IV, Sec. 18): “In fact, the highest conception that can be found, of either judge or chancellor, would be that of a pure intelligence fully comprehending all legal principles and utterly divested of compassion or sympathy. If a statute could be imagined to have a mind but no heart, an intellect but no feeling:

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in a word, to be endowed with the single capacity of deciding unerringly what the law is in every case, it would be a perfect chancellor as well as judge: for just in proportion as this icy standard is approached both become faultless ministers of justice in their respective departments.” (See also Blackstone, Vol. I, Pars. 61 and 62.)

GROTIUS is quoted as defining EQUITY to be “the correction of that wherein the law, by reason of its universality, is deficient.”

To these quotations many could be added in confirmation, and without further proof we insist that the case is made out, namely: That there are certain great principles which obtain in the philosophy of law: That the provision of pardon as exhibited in civil law is based on justice: That its use is contemplated only as a corrective measure to secure the administration of justice, and to be applied only “in such criminal cases as merit an exemption from punishment.”

If therefore the statement of Judge Kent be true, and “the admission of the power is a tacit acknowledgment of the infirmity of the course of justice,” and if the prerogative of pardon is corrective, then the power of pardon will not exist under a perfect administration of law in moral government. Since the divine government is per-

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fect in its constitution and perfect in its administration there can be nothing defective, nothing lacking, nothing needing correction, and nothing in either the enactment of laws or in their administration that can afford any reason or ground for the exercise of a prerogative which in civil jurisprudence is a corrective measure made necessary by infirmity, ignorance, or injustice.

The only avoidance of this conclusion must be found either in a denial that the principles underlying pardon in civil laws apply to the divine government or in a flat refusal to apply them.

Why do men shrink from a conclusion which plain and palpable logic peremptorily demands? In this case the answer may be found in the very mind that feels its force and evades the conviction of its truth. That pardon is impossible in a perfect system, and hence impossible in the moral government of God, *per se* seems a death knell to all religions, and contradicts intuitively the most reverent and cherished sentiments of Christian faith and experience. Moreover the employment of such conclusions by those who deny the truth of Christian experience, and who would substitute an ethical system as cold and rigid as it is impracticable, is to many the sole and sufficient reason for their denial. We have searched litera-

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ture to find an exception, but in all the books of law and theology consulted we have not found one which does not invariably justify a denial of this conclusion by some expression that betrays this fear and this motive. We do not share it, but bow to the inexorable logic of its truth and bid it a cordial welcome to a place among the “assured findings” of our philosophy. Later we shall need it in our theology.

CHAPTER III.

IN A PERFECT GOVERNMENT; PERFECT IN ITS CONSTITUTION AND PERFECT IN ADMINISTRATION; PARDON IS IMPOSSIBLE, PER SE.

“THE obligations of the law of God will last while He is on the throne of the universe. Pardon does not repeal law nor suspend it nor negative it. There is no such thing as pardon in His government; when His law is violated suffering must be endured, either by the original offender or by an adequate substitute.” (John P. Newman, *Supremacy of Law*, p. 81.)

BECCARIA (1764) wrote a treatise on crimes and punishments which Voltaire called the “Code of Humanity,” and on which he wrote a Commentary. The work was translated into the principal languages of Europe, including modern Greek, and rapidly ran through six editions. Catherine II of Russia caused it to be transcribed into her new code; and many of the reforms in the penal codes of the principal European nations are traceable to Beccaria’s work.

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It pointed out distinctly and temperately the grounds of the right of punishment and the relations of pardon; and said a French writer, “Never did so small a book produce such great effects.” In view of other authorities which we have before quoted a single reference will suffice. The philosophy of pardon is expressed in these words, viz., “In a perfect legal system pardon should be excluded, for the clemency of the prince seems a tacit disapproval of the law.”

It does not require extended legal knowledge to discern the conflict between the demands of justice and the remission of penalties. In common parlance, “The protection of society demands the punishment of the guilty.” The mercy that would open prison doors would be taken from the innocent and bestowed upon guilt. Such general amnesty would be “atoned” by society at large in as much or more suffering than a just execution of penalties would inflict upon those who deserve it.

In view of the conflict between the dictates of mercy to offenders and their duty to conserve the public safety, the problem of pardons has vexed every authority of State, from the days of Solomon down to the last Board of Pardons in the sovereign States of the American Republic. And we insist that this conflict is ORGANIC. It applies

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therefore to all law, divine as well as human. Does it then follow that the application of these principles should exclude mercy from the exercise of executive clemency in actual practice? By no means. We must not lose sight of the fact that justice is the end of all law, and that pardon is admissible when it is just. It is true, however, that an intelligent regard for these principles is necessary, and if more generally applied the public would be spared the numerous blunders and abuses of misdirected sentiment in pardon cases.

The best of human institutions are like the hand-made toys of children compared with the precise and exactly fitted products of machinery. The more cumbrous and complicated the mechanism the more need of "play" between the parts. Every boy acts on this principle, and he knows why the wheels of his wagon "wabble." In civil governments however wisely the laws be constructed and justice be administered from a human point of view, there will always be some disparity between them. To err on the side of mercy is therefore admissible and dictated by every sentiment of humanity. It is divinely humane. But it is not divine.

The laws of God, like the poise of His planets, need no guys and stays to control their place or

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correct their tendencies. Error in the realm of the absolute is impossible. Once you admit the fact of a divine precept with its declaration of penalty, you bar the thought of pardon as logically and absolutely as the extinction of the sun, moon, and stars would, in thought, mantle the world in a midnight of death. If the precept is just and the penalty just, the intervention of a prerogative voiding its execution would be unjust. It would violate a principle, and that principle the basis of all law, human and divine; namely, the principle of justice. The serious words of Bishop Newman quoted at the head of this chapter deserve to be repeated and emphasized: "There is no such thing as pardon in His government; when His law is violated suffering must be endured, either by the original offender or by an adequate substitute."

The blasted face of nature and the great, dark problem of evil, with all the sufferings entailed upon the innocent as well as the guilty, and which make history read like the story of a cursed world, had a cause. That cause was broken law. And notwithstanding a providential government giving direction to its ultimate destiny, the history of man is bloody and dark, while but few of the human species ever reach the plane of a life compatible with their capacities and ambitions. A self-

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ish complaisance may close its eyes to the status of sinful and suffering millions, but they suffer in atonement for somebody's wrong. No sentimental ingenuity can ever restore the thought of pardon to the mind that has once comprehended the full meaning of justice as embodied in moral precept and moral penalty under government perfect in constitution and administration. God could not be just and justify the ungodly. It would compromise God and justify sin. Legal barriers immutable and insurmountable cast their shadows across the immensity of moral being. The law is holy, just, and good, and that law demands obedience to its precept or the suffering of its penalty. Law without penalty would not be law. Its highest virtue would be only good advice sanctioned by such authority; which would give it prestige but not power.

The divine law corresponds to the divine character and requires conformity thereto, both on account of the divine nature and the ends of moral order. Sin, or the transgression of the divine law, demands penalty on account of its demerit (punitive justice), and on account of "due administration of law for the public good" (public justice).

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POSSIBLE REMEDY.

A remedy therefore, whatever its nature, must be first of all a legal remedy. A remedy which will harmonize with the principles involved in these: the divine character, the requirements of moral government. We must keep in mind the fact that there is nothing in the divine administration needing remedy, as in civil cases. We have seen that in civil laws the prerogative of pardon is a corrective measure, a remedy. The word remedy can not apply to the divine government in the same sense. The remedy we seek therefore does not reside in the divine prerogative, the mere option of the Supreme Being, nor in any expedient known to moral government. Its purpose is to render possible the salutary ends of pardon without conflicting with the law or compromising the divine character. Think what complicated ends it must compass in order to be a perfect legal and moral remedy!

Moral government is based on freedom of choice; hence the remedy must not be imperative, but available only, to accountable creatures by their own volitional acceptance. It must not infringe the liberty of moral agents, who may choose to reject it and elect to suffer the penalty. It must be a remedy the exercise of which is optional

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to the divine prerogative: both whether it shall be provided and when it shall be applied. For He is under no necessity either to provide a remedy or to bestow it.

It must be a remedy which will conform to the divine character and conserve the interests of moral government aside from the law and its penalty. And since the demerit of sin (punitive justice) and the public good (public justice) demand the execution of the penalty, a sufficient remedy must be one that would reconcile the pardon of sin to a remission of penalty and as fully declare the justice of God as the execution of the penalty itself would have declared it. Then, too, if it is a sufficient remedy it must not only thus afford a ground of pardon, but it must provide for the salutary ends for which it is designed, viz.: the restoration of the sinner to the divine favor and to amenability and obedience to law, together with all those highest ends originally sought in the creation of man and the inauguration of moral government, not only as related to the destiny of man, but the character and interests of all intelligences.

If such a remedy is possible, and if it can be found and applied to a reconciliation of all the legal and moral principles involved, with due recognition of the demerits of sin and the interests

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of moral government, there can be no reason why it may not be provided.

According to the Holy Scriptures the Atonement of Jesus Christ is that remedy. All the conditions that necessitated the execution of the penalty, or a perfect legal and moral equivalent for the penalty, were met in His death.

When we speak of necessity with reference to the conduct of the Supreme Being a contingency is always implied. When, for instance, He assumes an obligation by the creation of free beings and the declaration of law, the enforcement of that law becomes a necessity. And when He purposes the redemption of man either the penalty must be suffered or a legal equivalent must be substituted. The atonement is therefore a contingent necessity; a *sine qua non* (an indispensable condition).

These premises and this conclusion agree perfectly with the New Testament doctrine of the Atonement of Christ.

The third chapter of Romans contains a complete epitome of the doctrine as taught by the Apostle Paul. He affirms that “There is none righteous, no, not one. All the world guilty before God. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”

“But now the righteousness of God is mani-

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fested without the law: even the righteousness of God.” He then proceeds to show how the righteousness (justice) of God is manifested, namely, “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, to declare His righteousness.” He emphasizes this terrible term, “the righteousness of God,” by repeating it, “to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness.” If the Supreme Being should declare His righteousness by the execution of the penalty, what an awful manifestation at any time! But now, at this time, He declares it in Jesus Christ, whom He hath set forth to be a propitiation for the remission of sins. The climax of his whole argument is included in this twenty-sixth verse. It reads in full, “To declare I say at this time His righteousness: that He might be just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

CHAPTER IV.

REMEDIAL EXPEDIENTS: FAMILY GOVERNMENT. RE-PENTANCE AND REFORMATION NOT A LEGAL REMEDY. INCONSISTENT OPPONENTS AND ADVOCATES.

EVERY reader who has given due weight to the facts we have recited and the legal principles we have sought to emphasize, will anticipate the aim and course of this argument and hasten to such a conclusion as we have prematurely anticipated in the previous chapter, namely, that if pardon is impossible in a government perfect in its constitution and perfect in its administration, then the exercise of that prerogative will require first of all that something be done to reconcile the legal and moral principles involved. Therefore the conditions which give rise to the necessity for an atonement indicate largely the nature of that atonement. But lest our conclusions seem to lack something in the premises it will be necessary to give some attention to certain expedients in the way of remedy, commended as sufficient, and by some moralists as all-sufficient, without an atonement.

The most formidable objection to the need of an atonement is one that presumes on the beneficence

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of the divine being and His ability to pardon sin on the sole ground of repentance and reformation. If, says the objector, God is love, and if the guilty is so far reconciled to His law to repent and reform, why may not God exercise His right of prerogative and forgive sin without an atonement? This objection is made the more plausible by reciting the instances of family government and the exercise of pardon between man and man in which no atonement is proffered or needed.

The argument is specious. It wholly ignores facts which render the instances cited not parallel with the conditions of moral government. Paternal government and moral government are parallel in so many respects that we are in danger of ignoring the very vital principles in which they differ; differing sometimes so widely that the contrast is that of opposites. In a sense God is a father; but He is more: He is a sovereign. And as such He sustains a relation to law and to government which is not paralleled in either parental or civil government.

To make an instance of parental authority parallel it would require that one be both a father and a governor, or a father and a magistrate; and in that case it would be easy to see that his official relation would involve obligations which do not

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belong to parental authority, and the prerogative of pardon could not be exercised by mere parental caprice.

In JEVON'S *Logic*, page 177, we have an illustration of this kind of "fallacy of accident," viz.: "It would be a case of the direct fallacy of accident to infer that a magistrate is justified in using his power to forward his own religious views, because every man has the right to inculcate his own opinions." "Evidently a magistrate as a man has the rights of other men, but in his capacity of a magistrate he is distinguished from other men, and he must not infer of his special powers in this respect what is only true of his rights as a man." We may add to this very apt illustration that man in his capacity as a man, a father, a magistrate, a surgeon, a minister, or a friend in his conduct toward others is necessarily governed by the relation which he sustains to them. For instance, further, "He who thrusts a knife into another person should be punished; a surgeon in operating does so, therefore he should be punished," is a converse fallacy of accident. But neither of these fallacies in magnitude is at all comparable to the fallacy of comparing parental government (or the conduct of man with man) to the divine government in the matter of pardoning sin—human ca-

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price with the divine prerogative. The relation we sustain to each other is not the same, and the relation a father sustains to his children is not the same relation that God sustains to the guilty; therefore our conduct in any case is not a criterion of His conduct.

Fifty pages would not make it any clearer that the whole argument is based on a fallacy, and yet this is the chief reliance of those who deny the necessity for an atonement.

We find nothing in the literature of unbelief, which admits of human accountability to God, that does not presume on the relation which God sustains to us as a Father, and the relation which we sustain to each other as men to afford the ground and reason of pardon, instead of an atonement.

That relation being other than the relation assumed the argument loses its force, and we are compelled to conclude that the conduct of a moral governor is not illustrated by the conduct of either a father or a beneficent man.

Ordinarily, to an unbeliever it is enough to say that if he was but a civic ruler and his son should commit a crime against the law, much as his fatherly disposition might incline him to pardon the offense and remit the penalty, he would be compelled to face an embarrassment in fact which

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in theory he is inclined to ignore; and through some such rift in the clouds he might get a glimpse of the needed atonement. But among the critics we have met are a few ministers who fondly cling to this notion of a “humane God” in utter disregard both of the fallacy in the comparison, and of the New Testament plan of pardon which, as they must admit, is grounded wholly on the “redemption which is in Christ Jesus,” and not on the paternity of God.

It is not strange that men unaccustomed to the study of law or theology should resort to such palpable subterfuge; but that a theologian should give it any weight is chargeable either to a false philosophy with reference to the divine government, or to the fact that he has overlooked the divine beneficence in providing an atonement. A beneficence which was exhibited before the atonement was perfected, and which was not the result of the atonement, but the cause of it; and which so far transcends the human as the heavenly transcends the earthly.

This distinction between paternal government and moral government so easily overlooked is one of those “trifling incongruities” to which we referred in our introduction, and which belongs to a loose theology. In theories they are not always

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harmless, while in fact and in history such “trifling incongruities” put into practice have routed armies; yea, and wrecked worlds.

It is characteristic of these times to treat law and penalties, and the great serious warnings of revelation with slack regard. But fortunately for the peace of the world God has given to each of us what no parent can duplicate, *i. e.*, a sense of personal accountability to moral law, which when sin is actually committed becomes a sense of condemnation that no prerogative can wipe away. Somehow we **FEEL** that it must be atoned.

Sin against God is something more than wrong against an equal.¹

REPENTANCE AND REFORMATION.

Having treated one phase of this “most frequent and formidable” objection to the need of an atonement, it remains that we notice the other, viz., that repentance and reformation is all that is needed to justify the Supreme Being in remitting the penalty.

¹Dr. R. W. Dale, “Christian Doctrine,” page 246, in a paragraph of remarkable clearness puts it thus: “If there were nothing more in the divine forgiveness of human sin than a dismissal of what may be described as personal resentment against the sinner, a victory of the divine love over divine indignation provoked by ingratitude, disobedience, and revolt, it might be safe to argue that as we ourselves forgive without requiring an ‘atonement,’ the transcendent goodness of God would require none. But as the divine forgiveness obliterates the sense of guilt and releases the sinner from penalties which he has incurred by his violation of the eternal moral order, it may well be that an ‘atonement’ is necessary as the condition of God’s forgiveness, though it is not necessary as the condition of ours.”

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To this objection, put in its most plausible light, is sometimes added a sentiment which affirms that a moral life will satisfy the conditions of beneficent justice.

It is a common resort, and so common that its treatment will be regarded as commonplace. But the legal principles involved bring it within our purpose here, and we can not permit an enemy to escape merely because he is dressed in every-day clothes.

Repentance, which if genuine includes “works meet for repentance,” can not effect the legal principles involved. Though its genuineness be proved by confession and abandonment of sin, submission to the divine law, and a return to obedience, it can not always make restitution or undo the wrong done. But if it could do so with perfect mathematical equation, the claims of law would in nowise be met. So far as the law is concerned it avails a condemned felon nothing to repent. The law takes no notice of his contrition. The fact is a matter of universal knowledge, but the principle is often overlooked or ignored, especially with reference to the divine law. It is not only true of common law in criminal cases, but it must be true of the higher law because the principles and the reasons are the same.

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“The principles and axioms of law, which are general propositions flowing from abstracted reason and not accommodated to times and to men,” (Montesquieu, “Spirit of Laws,” XI, 6. Quoted also by Blackstone with approval), apply with equal reason and with more force to the divine law. Thus the law breaker is legally dead; and admitting all that is possible to the genuineness of his present protestations, or even the certainty of future loyalty, based on a thorough change of the attitude and intentions, nothing he can plead avails anything to change his relation to the law, except to suffer the penalty. Repentance indeed has a moral value, but it can not be conceived to have sufficient value to amend broken law. The proper attitude of a criminal is one of contrition, and he is “justified” in assuming such an attitude by the guilt that attaches to him; but no present disposition of mind, however becoming to his condemned state, can be esteemed a legal equivalent for either obedience to the precept or endurance of the penalty of the law.

And yet the objection we are considering assumes that repentance has a legal value, and to the extent of an atonement for sin.

It does not change the conditions nor add anything to the merits of the case to include refor-

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tion in the formula. It is the same thing emphasized.

Reformation, even if carried to the extent of transformation, involving an entire change of the heart and life, can not be presumed to change the legal aspects of the case. Present or future conformity to the law can not be supposed to amend a previous want of conformity.

To put the matter crudely: The obedience of to-day can not exempt from the requirements of obedience for to-morrow, and we have only to transpose the terms to see that repentance and reformation is ineffectual at any period of life to meet the legal requirements of any other period; and the supposition that it can do so must be based upon the theory that a sinner is competent not only to render perfect obedience to the law of God for the time given, but that he is able also to atone for his sins by rendering such service of supererogation as that the excess of his virtues may be applied to cancel former remissness. Thus one who would disclaim any sympathy with the doctrine of "meritorious works of supererogation" will resort to the same principle to prove his theory of "good works" as a ground of justification.

The law demands perfect obedience to its precepts, and it is evident that perfect obedience in

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one instance can not be made to answer the lack of it in another.

Thus this most common and most formidable objection to the need of an atonement which presumes on “the beneficence of God as a Father and His ability to pardon sin on conditions of repentance and reformation,” is found to be a specious argument; superficially fair, but contradicted by every legal principle involved, both in God’s relation to men and in our relation to law.

The New Testament Scriptures agree perfectly with this legal and logical conclusion, and the texts are so frequent and so familiar that if they were all quoted the reader would skip them and go on to the next chapter. “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” Gal. 2:16.²

²It will occur to the reader that in answer to the objection just treated we have covered about the ground of feasible and ordinary refusal to admit the necessity for an atonement. In general, there is but one other. That belongs wholly to the realm of negation. It denies the premises which the common sense of mankind will admit, namely, that man is accountable to a personal God, and that he is a sinner in need of salvation. It either denies or minimizes the turpitude of sin, or treats it otherwise than it is treated in the New Testament. It belongs to the realm of philosophy rather than to a place in systematic theology. Its premises are related to the Pauline doctrine of atonement about as modern Pluralistic Pantheism is related to the Cosmogony of Moses. It breaks completely with the New Testament and the common sense, and when it speaks or writes on the atonement of Christ, pays it about the same attention that Daniel Webster said his opponent paid to the subject of debate; that is, “not so much as the compliment of a passing glance.” St. Paul’s terrific arraignment of sin and sinners (in Rom. 1.2. & 3), “that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God,” is the only possible ground on which rests the need of an atonement; and this denied, minimized, or ignored, an atonement becomes a *non sequitur* an unwarranted conclusion.

CHAPTER V.

A DRY SUBJECT—INTERESTING. INCONSISTENT OPPONENTS AND ADVOCATES. ROMANS A LAW BOOK. INDICTMENT. PLEAS. VERDICT.

SOME would say that this burrowing into legal lore in search of principles is dry reading. Certainly it is. Dry as an “Abstract of Title.” Documents on file in the office of probate are very unedifying, unless one happens to be an heir or an assign. If then the property is in dispute even an abstract reads well.

In this case nobody can read it for us. The liberty to do our own thinking entails the duty of doing so; else even our interest in it might be imperiled. We have a testamentary document, and unless the testator was legally competent and the title is clear it is worthless. The whole question of estate goes with legal competency, and we are concerned to know. For, unless the atonement of Christ is a legal substitute for the penalty of sin, the whole fabric of grace and glory is a dream, opposed by principles of justice as immutable as the throne of God.

For the ordinary man there is not much of any-

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thing in this world beyond subsistence; and indeed this is about the only subject in which we all have a permanent interest: a subject which will concern the nations of the dead, and every being born or yet to be, when nothing is left to mark the place where we lived or the dust we left. What makes anything of practical interest to us is our relation to it when that relation is realized.

It was this that led Moses to make a choice that gripped the future and made his fame as imperishable as the pyramids, and is it not true that any man, however obscure, may discover a like attraction in the immutable things of the law and the cross with the same chance of a “better inheritance?” Our “abstract” then will afford us more interest if we study it in the light of a legacy.

It requires some grasp of thought to take in the two apparently opposite ideas of a perfect moral government with its just requirements and a plan of redemption that proffers the pardon of sin. Those who affirm the first and deny the second, and those who deny the first and affirm the second, are alike inconsistent. In order to get a clear understanding of the problem let it be separated. First, the moral government of God is perfect. In a government, perfect in its constitution and perfect in its administration, there is no

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room for pardon as a corrective measure. Pardon is therefore impossible.

Second, but God has provided an atonement which meets the just requirements of perfect moral government, and admits the exercise of pardon.

We have seen that the law requires obedience or penalty. Hence the organic difficulty in the way of pardon is the justice (righteousness) of God. Sin being premised, and the whole world guilty before God, He will manifest (declare) His justice by executing the penalty.

“But now” the New Testament avers that “Jesus Christ is set forth a propitiation, to declare the righteousness of God, that He might be just and the justifier.” We interpret these words to mean that the just requirements of moral government are thus met by the death of Christ (instead of the death of transgressors), and that the justice of God is declared as fully in the atonement as it is required to be declared by the execution of the penalty itself. Hence the pardon of sin is made possible in the perfect moral government of God. Thus while pardon remits the penalty in the case of the guilty, the justice that required its execution is not remitted, but actually met in the death of Jesus Christ.

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If it is urged that perfect moral government admits of no pardon we agree; but if it is claimed that perfect moral government admits of no atonement we demur.

The two propositions are two very unlike things. Moral government does admit of atonement, and no objector can show a single legal principle to be violated by its admission. He can show the violation of principles in moral government by admitting pardon without a legal equivalent; but he can not show any such violation against the admission of an atonement: for an atonement is a legal equivalent. If he affirms the impossibility of legal equivalents he has overlooked the very definition of law, *i. e.*, obedience or penalty. Penalty itself is the legal (not moral) equivalent of obedience: and a **LEGAL SUBSTITUTE FOR THE PENALTY** (atonement) contradicts no law, human or divine. But it renders pardon possible in a government perfect in its constitution and perfect in its administration.

Therefore the proposition, which for clearness we divided, when combined into one presents a consistent whole, namely, the perfect moral government of God admits of no pardon; but God has provided an atonement which meets the just requirements of moral government and renders par-

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don possible. If up to this point we have made our position clear we are ready to inquire into the nature of the atonement, in reply to the question of what an atonement must do and be in order to the pardon of sin.

But we have said of the two apparently opposite ideas of a perfect government with pardon impossible and an atonement which renders pardon possible, that those who affirm the first and deny the second, and those who deny the first and advocate the second are alike inconsistent.

And lest we be not understood or invite attack from either source we must give both attention before we proceed with the argument, even at the expense of continuity.

Because some men, rated as “infidels,” with better knowledge of the legal principles involved than some of the theologians, have asserted that in a perfect government pardon is impossible; and because they have sought to include in their definitions the pardon proffered through our Lord Jesus Christ, their conclusions have been subjected to prompt and positive denial.

This demurrer is sometimes dignified by the names of very able and scholarly men; usually with brevity and sometimes with rebuke.

Appalling is the word they apply; but it is ap-

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plied in the wrong place: Not to the rejection of Christ, but to the truth affirmed. Meanwhile the lawyer looks on with disdain and rather glories in being called a monster by his pious brother.

Now we admit that “pardon impossible in a perfect government” has a refractory look; and when it is made to include the remedial means of the gospel it requires some patience to hear it without chagrin. It seems to sweep clean through the moral government of God, taking with it not only the possibility of pardons, but the only legal expedient which renders pardon possible.

Nevertheless truth requires us to affirm that the lawyer is right in his first premise, and that the second does not necessarily follow. By all the legal principles involved pardon is impossible to the idea of a perfect government, and the only usual denial or evasion of this truth grows out of the unwelcome inferences which seem to follow. *The objector instead of looking back over the ground to find a flaw in the argument looks forward to the things inferred, and since they are not congenial to his theology he repudiates the very truth he needs on which to ground the necessity for an atonement.*

Pardon impossible under perfect legal sanctions is a weapon which must be taken out of the

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wrong hands and wielded in defense of any atonement, the need of which is grounded in the righteousness of God, or the rectoral requirements of moral government.

The imperial demands of law in a perfect government can not be waived aside by a denial, any more than the only legal expedient provided for pardon in the propitiation of Christ. In no instance that has come to our knowledge has there been any attempt to examine the ground of the argument, by which it is proved that pardon is impossible in perfect government; but the conclusion is always treated by these presumably orthodox writers as though it were but dogmatic assertion to be answered by the same dogmatic disavowal. Says the skeptic, sometimes versed in the law, “Pardon is impossible in a perfect government; therefore any scheme of salvation that looks backward to the remission of sins, instead of forward to the reformation and partial atonement of a better life, is not possible under the exact conditions of perfect justice.”

Says the theologian: “We deny your first premise. Pardon is not impossible in divine government. God is merciful as well as just. Your conclusion cancels the whole gospel,” etc.

The skeptic has only to ask, “If then sin is par-

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donable in a perfect moral government, why was an atonement necessary to make it so?"'

The truth is our theologian has assumed an untenable position. We are handling great verities, and it becomes us to be cautious lest we drop dynamite among our own defenses.

The easy and only solution is one that affirms the whole truth, namely, that pardon is impossible in a perfect goverment, *per se*; that there is a governmental bar to the exercise of the divine mercy, and every orthodox theologian from Paul to our deponent has always recognized such great organic difficulty in the way of pardon, which could only be met by the death of the Son of God.

The cross and the cross only intercepts the terrible demands of penalty, while the government of God still stands perfect; obedience is still required, and the claims of law perfectly adjusted to the moral economy that God has established are not ignored nor the righteousness of God compromised by justifying sinners. We will dismiss our inconsistent theologian with but one other thought, viz., that if pardon was possible in a perfect government then the atonement of Christ loses its imperative significance as the only possible ground of pardon. Then either God could pardon sin by mere prerogative or on some ground other than

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the sufferings and death of Christ. Why then the three times unanswered prayer of Gethsemane? Why the dreadful cross? Would such a Father endure the crucifixion of such a Son merely as a preferable expedient, when it was possible to employ other means to attain the same ends? Would any father permit his son to endure such hours of mortal torture for any less motive than his eternal honor and the eternal loss of immortal souls?

If you are an orthodox theologian bury your theology in the nomenclature of words, but spare us the conviction that you mean that something else would atone for sin as well as the death of the Son of God!

In concluding this parenthetic chapter, what shall we say of the “inconsistent objector” who affirms our first premise as to moral government, and denies the pardon of sin by means of redemption? That is, who affirms pardon impossible absolutely.

Of course his conclusion is appalling. This very fact argues mightily if not conclusively for an atonement. We will meet him fairly on his own ground; that is, on the ground of infinitely perfect justice. Can it be possible that a just (not to say beneficent) God would subject His creatures to the awful perils of freedom (which He has

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done) under a perfect moral government and in which pardon is impossible, without at the same time a foreordained purpose of redempton, as free to our choice as vice or virtue is? Would He expose the millions of His creatures to the terrible contingencies of moral freedom, under a perfect government, without any provision which would render it consistent for Him to exercise the prerogative of pardon?

It is inconceivable. It would not be just. There is a meaning in the words “that He might be just” that dates from the eternal purpose. It is unreasonable to suppose that a just God would not provide against the exigencies of moral government. The thought is well-nigh inconceivable, and the only escape with an objector will be sooner or later to MINIFY SIN or its penalty, and thus escape the appalling consequences of his creed.

The only thinkable possibility of a soul lost, with a just God on the throne, is not because His government is perfect, nor because He has not made pardon possible, but because of what He can not do, namely: He can not save a soul which, free to sin and free to remain a sinner, refuses to accept a pardon freely offered through the atonement of Jesus Christ.

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To save that soul is the one thing which God can not do; and a rejection of Jesus Christ therefore puts a sinner under a government perfect in its constitution and perfect in its administration, where without an atonement pardon is impossible forever.¹

In view of the foregoing we again affirm that pardon is impossible under a perfect administration of law; and that either the penalty must be suffered or a substitute for the penalty be provided in order to the remission of that penalty.

Having seen that pardon by the divine prerogative is not possible, that parental government is not parallel, that an atonement is possible, we pause to ask whether these conclusions are confirmed or contradicted by the New Testament authorities?

Chief among these are the Pauline Epistles.

The Book of Romans is the greatest treatise on the subject of the atonement ever written.

If it is found that these premises are ignored by the apostle, and that his thesis does not recognize the impossibility of pardon under a perfect

¹The New Testament gospel plainly, repeatedly, and positively declares that the divine ability to save sinners rests on the atonement of Jesus Christ—"Wherefore He is able to save." It is equally explicit in declaring that some men will be forever lost. Does any good man suppose that God would permit the eternal damnation of a soul if He could help it? Let every man face his own philosophy.

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administration of law, then we do well to reconsider the matter and modify our conclusions. But if we find that St. Paul does recognize the principles here asserted, that he does presume that pardon is impossible without an atonement, and for the same reasons, then our contention is proved, and we may proceed to inquire into the nature of the atonement itself.

Therefore we will devote the next chapter to the Book of Romans: to an analysis of St. Paul's method, and to the argument by which he proves the need of an atonement.

CHAPTER VI.

PAUL THE APOSTLE. THE BOOK OF ROMANS A LAW BOOK. PLEADINGS, ETC.

“THE Book of Romans is a summary of the hand-to-hand synagogue debates of Paul with the Jews of his day.” “A concise written summary. A most compressed yet most comprehensive system of theology, in which every point of Christian doctrine takes its place with a most amazing completeness and symmetry.” (“Introduction to Romans,” D. D. Whedon.)

ROMANS.

ST. PAUL is at Alexandria, Troas, facing Europe and about to cross over. Behind him lies Asia Minor, which he is divinely forbidden to re-enter and preach. Before him is the *Ægean Sea*, and beyond, the shores of Europe. The midnight vision invites him to “Come over and help us:” the gospel, and hence the fortunes of future Christian civilization, clinging to the skirts of the great apostle.

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What a picture that would make! What great pivotal event in the history of mankind will compare with that of his crossing over? Is it that of Alexander, who with his armies had crossed the same Hellespont on his way to the subjugation of the East? The one to lay the foundation of Greek civilization, language, and letters, and to prepare the way for synagogues and Septuagints! The other to make use of them and to carry the gospel West!

Blow, ye winds! And buoy ye waters up that gallant ship: the cargo of a world's concern, the civilization of Europe and America; and, following the sun in its course, the ultimate Christianization of Japan and Korea, of China and India, of Africa and the Islands of the Sea.

Would we have been HEATHEN or MOHAMMEDAN, if (under "the theory of evolution as the explanation of the history of literature and of religion") Paul and those with him had not come over to help us?¹ Paul was ever ready to preach the gospel at Rome (Rom. 1:15); but this missionary circuit was destined to include Philippi, Thes-

¹At that time "the ancestors of modern Europe and of us divided the forests of Central Europe with wild beasts." During later times the Crescent, contending with the Cross, subjugated that same Asia Minor and penetrated Europe to the Atlantic Ocean and threatened the extirpation of Christianity itself. What if there had been no Christianity to extirpate!

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salonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth, and be completed without his seeing Rome.

But here, while at Corinth, as if impatient of delay, he wrote the Epistle to the Romans and sent it by the hand of Phœbe, a Christian Deaconess at Cenchrea.

How there came to be a Church at Rome, and by whom founded it is not now our interest to inquire. It is certain that an infant Christian Church existed, and that St. Paul had not as yet been to Rome.

In view of its importance as the political center of the world, and the possible future of a Christian Church at Rome, the then existing conditions demanded just such a complete summary of the whole gospel as is presented in the Epistle.

In addressing the churches he had himself founded it was not necessary to repeat in full and with the same emphasis the doctrines and ethics of Christianity.² But fortunately for the Church at Rome, and for us, a most comprehensive system of theology is furnished in this Epistle. It is an

²This statement is true as a general rule; but in the case of the apostle conditions are exceptional. The amount of attention given to the cross in each Epistle from Romans to Hebrews is remarkable. As if he would identify each Church with the doctrines he had preached, he puts them in permanent form and immortalizes the preaching of the cross in every letter. To the Corinthians he wrote, "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." (1 Cor. 1:17 and 2:2.) Then, as if to keep it ever before them as first

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inaugural, a platform, and a complete epitome of apostolic doctrinal preaching.

IT IS A LAW Book.

Since the background of the gospel is the law, and justification is the theme of discussion, the book of Romans is a law book.

Its terms are law terms. The argument follows legal precedents in due form and logical order. It begins with the righteousness (justice) of God. Then proceeds with an awful INDICTMENT against sin and sinners. In extenuation of human guilt it exhausts every PLEA known to legal practice. Then it arraigns the whole world as GUILTY and under the judgment of God. “Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin,” is the conclusion of that arraignment. It sounds like the deathknell of justification, but it agrees perfectly with the premises we have urged, viz., no pardon possible under a perfect administration of law. There must be some other way. Some

in order and first in importance, he writes, “I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received; how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.” (1 Cor. 15: 3.) A casual reading of any one of his Epistles will show that this dominant note is never omitted and that Christ crucified and risen found permanent place in every letter. The theme may be said to so saturate the work of the apostle that our “general rule” scarce applies.

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way that will maintain the righteousness (justice) of God and yet render pardon possible “without the law,” that is, without any provision found in the law.

We will now proceed to analyze St. Paul’s argument; to show first that he recognizes the facts that we have recited, namely, that the legal bar to the pardon of sin resides in the just requirements of moral government, that is, in the righteousness of God. Second, that his method of approach is the legal and logical method, and his conclusions in full recognition of the premises we have laid down. We do not offer a commentary on the text as an exposition for its exegetical value; and hence we keep in view only the main argument, and much that is incidental, or repeated only for the sake of emphasis is passed over or utilized indifferently.

ANALYSIS.

The divine method of salvation “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” is the subject matter of the book; and St. Paul’s method of treating it is expressed by the one word **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, or justice. It is an *a priori* condition of all reasoning on the subject of remedies that something is wrong; and very properly the nature of that wrong can only be determined by an appeal to

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some standard. If it be a physical wrong the standard must be physical; if a moral or spiritual wrong, the standard must be of the same nature. In the treatment of the subject of salvation “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” the standard which St. Paul presumes is the “righteousness of God,” and the objective sought is the righteousness, or rectification, of man.

That God is righteous, and that conformity thereto is requisite to the salvation of man is therefore assumed.³ From the exordium or introduction he gracefully glides into the great thesis, beginning properly at verse 16, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.” His first premise is found in the next verse, “for therein is revealed THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.”⁴

³In the light of the philosophical negations of the twentieth century, that is a great assumption! But it agrees with the common sense of mankind and the opinions of the best thinkers of the ages. “Emerson quotes the Welsh Triad as saying, ‘God Himself can not procure good for the wicked.’ Julius Muller, Dorner, Rothe, Schleirmacher, no less than Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates, assert that in the nature of things there can be no blessedness without holiness.”—Joseph Cook, on “Theodore Parker,” etc.

⁴“The righteousness of God.” Dr. D. D. Whedon interprets this phrase, in Rom. 1:17 and 3:21, 22, to mean, “Not merely the righteousness with which God is invested, but the righteousness with which through Christ He invests us. The latter is the radiant reflection from the former.” The same word “righteousness” in 3:25, 26, he defines as “rectoral or governmental justice.” If by implication the first is allowable, it by no means affects our use of it. Because if Rom. 1:17 were entirely omitted, “the wrath of God revealed” in the next and succeeding verses amply justifies the use we make of the divine attribute of justice. If the point is, first, how to attain righteousness, and St.

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The righteousness of God! What can he do with that? Has it not unangeled angels and wrecked worlds?

Nevertheless he begins with it and immediately adds, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (verse 18).

In the next chapter, and here and there like a vivid flash the words law, wrath, and righteousness break into the argument. "Wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." "Who will render to every man according to his works." "For as many as have sinned without the law shall also perish without the law, and as many as have sinned under the law shall be judged by the law." "The doers of the law shall be justified . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men according to my gospel by Jesus Christ."

There is no mistaking such terms. The righteousness of God, the requirements of divine justice demand the punishment of the guilty.

Two things are assured, namely: First, a rec-

Paul here—1: 17—indicates God's method, and hence calls it "the righteousness of God," we admit the fact that it truly is so: But that thus early in the discussion St. Paul meant to use the phrase in that sense rather than in the general sense of the words, we are not quite convinced. They seem to us to be stronger the other way. However, as this interpretation assumes just what St. Paul aims to prove, viz., that God has such a method of rectification for man, we do not object.

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ognition of the very ground we have assumed; second, the apostle's method of approaching the subject makes it plain that the principles involved are legal principles.

He does not approach the subject of "the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (the atonement) as some do. That is, by utterly ignoring the legal principles involved.

St. Paul faces the awful problem and grapples with the terrible realities of "the righteousness of God," "the wrath of God," the ill deserts of sin, the law, and the judgment day.

First in order and first in importance he lays right hold of the justice which in a moral government, perfect in its constitution and perfect in its administration, demands the execution of penalty and bars the prerogative of pardon; and he grounds the need of an atonement on the just requirements of law.

What he does not do is as significant as what he does. He does not flatter his readers by assuming that the status of mankind is such that the rectification of sinners may be effected by the persistent emulation of Christ as a good example.

He does not first lay hold of the divine love as the moving cause of redemption: which it truly is. Nor does he base the pardon of sin upon the

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divine prerogative, nor repentance and reformation (good works) nor parental tenderness, etc.

His method of approach is the legal method; and those who discard any view of the atonement which primarily views it from a legal and forensic standpoint must reckon with St. Paul's example: both as to the method of his argument and as to the argument itself. Some other method may be popular, but it is not Pauline, and if we ignore these grave facts and climb up some other way we must challenge apostolic authority and break with the New Testament.

An advocate of an atonement which was based on the expediency of a good example, or its moral influence only, instead of beginning with the righteous wrath of Almighty God, would shun such terms as are employed by St. Paul by as much as the space of a celestial diameter.

St. Paul's legal method is further evidenced by the fact that in his indictment of a guilty world he takes up and examines all the ordinary legal pleas in extenuation of human guilt before passing to the final arraignment. Not in literal, formal order; that is merely a matter of arbitrary taste. His is the oratorical order, and the legal argument is made the more climacteric and impressive.

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PLEAS IN EXTENUATION.

FIRST: ON THE GROUND OF INNOCENCE. It needs no argument to prove that God may be just and justify the innocent. Let innocence be presumed and every principle of right stands ready with a vindication. The whole question turns upon guilt or innocence, and **JUSTIFICATION** is only a term by which we announce the latter.

But St. Paul does not base his doctrine of Justification upon the ground of innocence. The burden of the first two chapters is “against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.” Proving “both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin.” “There is none righteous, no, not one.” “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”

SECOND: ON THE GROUND OF NON-ACCOUNTABILITY? OR IGNORANCE?

We may reasonably presume that either of these should be entitled to some palliation, and if the apostle makes any concession here it would harmonize with the requirements of law.

While ignorance is no justification for the violation of law in general, in moral equity it may be; and it applies fully so far as the principles we have in hand are concerned.

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Can the sinner plead ignorance? St. Paul takes another view of it. He says, "that which may be known of God is manifest to them; for God hath shewed it unto them." "For the invisible things of Him are clearly seen." "When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God."

The whole catalogue of alleged wickedness charges criminal intent, "maliciousness," "malignity." "They did not like to retain God in their knowledge" (Rom. 1:19, 20, 21, 28 and 29).

THIRD: IS IT UPON MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES extenuating the guilt or justifying the course pursued? Are men under some fatal necessity compelling them to sin?

We find men justifying themselves on these grounds, but the apostle says "they are without excuse."

To cover his answers to this specification would require us to quote almost the whole of the first two chapters and half of the third. Let it suffice that no conceivable plea in extenuation of human sin escapes his notice, and keeping the law steadily in view he concludes with a paragraph to which we call special attention: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it speaketh to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be brought

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under the judgment of God: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight.”

FOURTH: ON THE GROUND OF EXPIATION. Is it not possible that the guilty, by enduring the penalty, may cancel the legal obligation and thus attain that justification which until then is withheld?

The demands of law require either obedience to the precept or endurance of the penalty. Either of these will secure the dignity of the law, and one or the other is imperative.

If the precept is obeyed, “the doers of the law shall be justified” (chap. 2:13). And is it not equally clear that if the precept is disobeyed, and in lieu of it the penalty suffered, that the crime is expiated, and the criminal thereafter stands justified in the sight of the law?

There can be no doubt of this; for the law can reach no farther than its penalty, and the execution of the penalty is a full legal equivalent for the required obedience to its precept.

Should any supposed penalty fall short of this, exact justice would affirm that the penalty was inadequate and not of sufficient value or severity to offset a lack of obedience to the precept.

Both stand on the same sanctions and are legal equivalents. Therefore if it can be presumed that

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the sinner has suffered the penalty he will reoccupy the place of innocence, or be legally justified.

In common parlance it is sometimes said of one who has suffered for a capital offense that "he EXPIATED his crime on the gallows." We mean that law has now no more quarrel with him.

The penalty executed, there remains no legal principle that is not satisfied. If a criminal is incarcerated for a term of years, and having served his sentence he returns to freedom, he occupies the same **LEGAL** status which he did before the commission of his crime, and the same as that of a law-abiding citizen. Abiding by the penalty is the same legally as abiding by the precept. It will not do to cite attainders, as in England, or certain deprivations of elective franchise as customary with us in the United States; for admitting these they are but parts of the penalty, and the whole of legal exaction is not suffered until the whole penalty is suffered.⁵

That obedience to the precept and endurance of the penalty are legal equivalents is expressed in the definition which we "tentatively" adopted at the outset, viz., Law is a rule of action prescribed

⁵Observe we are not here applying these facts to the divine government. The instances are employed merely to show that a penalty is not exhausted by the endurance of a part of it. Legal equivalents are not moral equivalents. We compare like things with like, which is perfectly legitimate.

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by a superior power which the inferior is bound to obey or suffer the penalty of disobedience; thus expressing an alternative.

Therefore is it not possible that the guilty, by enduring the just penalty for sin, may cancel the legal obligation and thus attain justification?

In the second chapter, verses 6 and 7, we read, “Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life.” Here the apostle seems to except from those who are condemned a certain class; but he proceeds to declare that there are no such persons—“No, not one.” “They are all gone out of the way.” “All have sinned.” The eternal life premised would be the award of the righteous, but “there is none righteous, no, not one.” The question must then apply to the condition of the guilty. Is there one word in the whole thesis that admits the possibility of human expiation? What future is anticipated for a single one of “the whole world?”

His reference to the future is this, “Treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (Rom. 2:5). Not “paying off the old score,” but treasuring it up—wrath *vs.* wrath.

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However others may regard the possibility of enduring the imposed penalty in this life or the next, St. Paul writes as if violated law knew no reversal of penalty forever.

The award of righteousness is eternal life; and by a parity of reasoning we must interpret the penalty for sin on the same plane, that is, eternal death.

The terms employed, “judgment of God” (repeatedly), “Wrath of God,” “Indignation and wrath,” “tribulation and anguish upon every soul that doeth evil,” culminate with the announcement, Rom. 2:16, “In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”

Previously he has repudiated “the works of the law,” and now the whole field is swept clean of every possible plea in extenuation, leaving no room for any possible human expiation for sin.

The inclusive “upon every soul that doeth evil,” and the exclusive “no, not one righteous,” and the comprehensive “all have sinned and the whole world under the judgment of God,” renders legal justification impossible and the penalty absolute and universal.^e

^eRom. 2:12. “As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law.” The apostle makes sure that none escape. Those not under the levitical law are overtaken by that eternal rule of right which is grounded in the righteousness of God, and thus perish by that law.

CHAPTER VII.

ROMANS CONCLUDED. PARDON MADE POSSIBLE BY THE PROPITIATION OF CHRIST. A LEGAL EQUIVALENT OF THE PENALTY PROVIDED.

“BUT Now”

- 3:21 The righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;
- 22 Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all that believe: for there is no difference:
- 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
- 24 Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:
- 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;
- 26 To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

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“But now.” Here is the great transition, the pivotal phrase in the apostle’s argument. Instead of coming to a full stop at the word guilty, like some great train turned by a switch, it goes thundering through to a different destination.

The problem solved, and the one we have presumed to discuss is this: How can a just God justify the ungodly?

Observe: Justification is a legal term.¹ And the apostle in turning to a remedy that will render justification possible in the perfect moral government of God begins with the same great legal premise as before, viz., “the righteousness of God.”

Four times in the paragraphs above quoted “the righteousness of God” burdens the argument. The same legal principles employed in the first part of the argument are embodied in this.

He does not build a theory of the atonement on new premises.

Far from it. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD must

¹“Justification. (Some form of the verb *δικαιόω*). A forensic term equivalent to acquittal and opposed to condemnation; in an apologetic sense it is often synonymous with vindication or freeing from unjust implication or blame.”

“This term in theological usage is employed to designate the judicial act of God by which He pardons all the sins of the sinner who believes in Christ, receiving him into favor, and regarding him as relatively righteous, notwithstanding his past actual unrighteousness. Hence justification and the remission or forgiveness of sin relate to one and the same act of God.” McClintock & Strong.

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be manifested, declared, and propitiated in the blood of Christ.

St. Paul's breadth of comprehension is seen in the way he combines belief in Christ with the principles embodied in the atonement. But now, for the sake of clearness, suppose we eliminate every related idea and trace only the legal and the redemptive ideas in the statement.

His conclusion would then amount to this, namely, with the background of a world's guilt and under the righteous law of God there is no remission. But now, the righteousness of God is manifested by other means than the execution of the penalty on a guilty world. That is, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation in His blood, to declare His righteousness. Not in time past nor in the day of judgment, but at this time to declare His righteousness; that He might be just and the Justifier of the ungodly.

This then is the atonement. The death of Christ is either the penalty suffered, or it is the legal equivalent therefor, a substitute for the penalty.

In either view, the atonement of Christ comes to have a meaning exalted as the righteousness of God and deep as the desolate curse of sin. A the-

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ory of the atonement which makes the death of Christ merely incidental to His mission—a martyrdom—and its chief utility that of “a moral influence,” finds no sanction in the awful depths of such truth. The closing sentence, “that He might be just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus,” is worthy the blast of an angel’s trumpet. Every gospel trumpet that does not chord with this gives an uncertain sound. “To declare His righteousness that God might be just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus,” is God’s answer to the question of Necessity. An atonement proper, grounded deep in the organic structure of moral government, vindicating the divine administration in extending pardon to the guilty millions of His accountable creatures, and without which pardon is forever impossible in the perfect moral government of God.

It is the great substantial basis of the Christian religion and the greatest theme of religious thought. Break down the certainty of such an atonement and Christianity crumbles to the level of an ethical philosophy, bereft of the wisdom and the power of God. It is only thus that we can explain the sacrificial types and the expiatory terms so common to the Scriptures.

“By His stripes we are healed.” “On Him

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was laid the iniquity of us all.” “He made His soul an offering for sin.” “He died for our sins.” “He tasted death for every man.” These and like sentences from the Word, and the many similar incisive utterances of apostolic preaching are keyed to the same great truth, and it is not within the power of human speech to make them more emphatic and impressive. Familiar texts like tunes often run through the mind by automatic rhythm without so much as a courteous recognition; but if the reader will look any one of the following squarely in the face he will recognize the principle for which the apostle contends.

“Who was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification” is the closing verse of the 4th chapter of this epistle. “Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” is the first verse of the 5th chapter, and really the climax of his argument. It indicates the open door through which we enter experimentally into the economy of grace which God has established. Hence the apostle adds, “By whom we have access into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God,” etc. Thus by an easy and logical transition, from the atonement as the ground of salvation, he proceeds to unfold his gospel and

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urge its acceptance. He began by introducing a gospel of which he was not ashamed, and closes with this magnificent peroration: “Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known to all the nations unto obedience of faith: to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever. Amen.”

Half the capital of a loose liberalism is to divert attention from the New Testament; but until you have destroyed apostolic authority we refuse to be diverted, and add herewith a few passages only, knowing that they are so familiar that more would not be read.

“In due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6). “When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son” (ver. 10). “In whom we have redemption through His blood” (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). “Who gave Himself a ransom for all” (1 Tim. 11:6). “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many” (Heb. 9:28).

The Epistle to the Hebrews, another apostolic

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book, complete in itself, and surveying the whole ground of redemption through Christ, bears the same testimony, and if subjected to analysis supports the same conclusion.²

Our chief embarrassment in treating the subject grows out of the abundance of materials, the voluminousness of texts, and the perfect opulence of words, phrases, figures, and illustrations; while the usual answer to it all is an evasion.

We conclude, therefore, that the atonement of Christ was imperatively required to render possible what in the nature of divine government was otherwise impossible.

That the pardon of sin, and the whole economy of grace (favor) which God has established for the salvation of sinful men is grounded on the atonement. That Christ, our ransom, suffered the penalty, or the legal equivalent for the penalty, to declare His righteousness, that God might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

The problem is solved, and Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. It is the negative side of the atonement. The *sine qua non* (without which not), and answers perfectly the question of **LEGAL NECESSITY**,

²See Bishop Merrill's Treatise on "Atonement," in which such an analysis is found.

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without trenching on the realm of mystery or going beyond the depth of an intelligent appreciation of the fundamental principles of moral law: A legal necessity growing out of the just requirements of a perfect moral government in which pardon without an atonement is forever impossible.

MYSTERY.

Is some friendly critic ready to ask, Is this the only reason for the atonement? Where then is the glorious mystery of redemption? We reply, there are innumerable and affirmative reasons and motives, moral and spiritual.

Reasons growing out of the infinite love of God and His condescension, the lost state of man, and the perils and interests of moral government.

There are profound mysteries, and problems, too. Some of these will appear when we come to study the nature of the atonement.

The salutary ends achieved, the new relations sustained, the intelligences concerned, and destinies effected, give rise to problems which only divine revelation can solve; while vials poured out, trumpets sounded, thunders sealed, and other metaphors and symbols veil the awful retributions of sin and the unutterable glories of redemption in time and eternity.

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The Book of Revelation is the apocalypse of Jesus, and its mysteries concerning earth and time and eternity reaching beyond the galaxies and into the infinities belong to the “glorious mystery of redemption,” and to the “slain Lamb.”

Do we then make void the mystery of the atonement? God forbid: yea, we establish the mystery upon an immutable foundation—the just requirements of a perfect moral government.

We have attempted to clear the approaches by proving that God can not deny Himself and extend pardon to sinners in violation of a principle, which is not a mystery.

What we deprecate is the presumption that ignores or discourages the study of the atonement under the pretext that it is a mystery beyond our comprehension; while that branch of the subject which most concerns the masses of mankind, namely, its legal necessity, is not an insurmountable difficulty, but one that can be rationally explained to the comprehension of an open mind.

A duty dictated by the most urgent motives, but often evaded by charging to the mystery of the atonement what actually belongs to the muddle of the student.

CHAPTER VIII.

“FOR I SPEAK TO MEN WHO KNOW THE LAW.”—PAUL.

BEFORE we discuss the nature of the atonement further, lest one of those “trifling incongruities” which we have noted should be overlooked and in the end mar our conclusions, it is necessary to devote a chapter to some controversial questions and relevant objections.

Thus far we have not attempted to show how the death of Christ met the requirements of moral government, except as an answer to such question might be inferred. We have been engaged with the question of legal necessity, *i. e.*, what in the nature of things rendered an atonement necessary to the pardon of sin? While the nature, extent, and mystery of the atonement has received but incidental attention.

If we are asked a reason for such proportionate treatment, we reply, The living! The living!

Outside of theological circles thinking men are not so much concerned with the doctrinal status of the atonement as to know why such a divine

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expedient was necessary. The nature of the atonement and its relative place in a doctrinal system does not so much concern their interest. But the question of necessity amounts to asking a reason for their duty in accepting Christ as Redeemer.

To minds unprejudiced the question carries with it the motives of faith or unbelief, and if the significance of the atonement as a ground of salvation is swept away the question of necessity goes with it, and in logical sequence the imperative need of Christ as a personal Savior.

Evasion of this question on the part of some evangelical teachers, and such an atonement as proffered by others, has been equivalent to a negation, and thus motives that would constrain men are wanting.

It is the work of an advocate, or an apostle, to enlighten the understanding, convince the judgment, rouse the conscience, and persuade the will; and nothing in the vast field of religious thought affords such an appeal as the motives that brought the Son of God to the sufferings of the cross.

Convince men of the unity of law, that eternal, immutable righteousness demands the punishment of sin, and that the same irrevocable law made an atonement necessary to the exercise of the prerogative of pardon, and it is not far to see that faith

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in Christ is equally imperative: that to reject Christ is to challenge that law and invite its primary penalty upon the real offenders.

The motives that led to the cross are measureless, but if they were not of the character revealed in the New Testament they need not have been revealed. They might have been easily inferred. If the crucifixion was only an historic incident, and Christ died for the truth—instead of dying for sinners—we needed no such revelation as contained in the Scriptures to declare it.

The apostles might have preached an ethical gospel; they might have said that Jesus died as a martyr: they might have treated the crucifixion as an historic incident, which the philosophy of history would explain (or left it to “the theory of evolution as an explanation of the history of literature and of religion”), or they might have made the Incarnation the saving mystery of the gospel. But they did not!

Their preaching was distinctively, significantly, and vehemently the “preaching of the cross.” Why? Because heaven threw upon the cross a revelation, in the light of which the cross is seen to declare the righteousness of God, that God might be just and justify the ungodly. It is not a gospel that can be rationally explained with-

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out a revelation from God. St. Paul declares as much in Galatians 1:11, 12: "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." All that the gospel is, over and above and beyond what it would have been if Jesus had died for the truth only, renders it the "wisdom of God and the power of God to every one that believeth." And it is no wonder, then, if a theory of the atonement which is true to the New Testament is "to them that perish foolishness" (1 Cor. 1:18). We do well, therefore, to heed the Word that has made plain the fact that God's method of redemption does not commend itself to the wisdom of this world, "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise" (ver. 27).

The atonement, therefore, is something unique in the divine economy; and it is one of the marks of genuineness if our theory of it is branded as barbarous or out of date. For, sure as it harmonizes with that of the New Testament, it will carry enough of this odium—the offense of the cross, the reproach of Christ—to bear a resemblance. Lifted like a serpent is a figure Jesus Himself used, and it contains a truth that goes deep into

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the significance of the cross. There are theories of the atonement not open to the criticism of being either barbarous or ancient.

One such put in logical syllogistic form would have for its first premise the statement that “the death of Christ was not an atonement for sin;” the second premise would recite the many salutary lessons of the cross, and the conclusion would be that the death of Christ was not a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, but anything else comprehended in the premises recited.

With such a “theory” the question of necessity is quieted; buried under numerous plausible commendations with such exquisite taste and skill that it is the achievement of criticism to detect the utter absence of an atonement and distinguish it from Christianity.

The atonement not a ground of salvation, not an imperative conditional provision of pardon, may be the product of an ingenuous erudition, but it contradicts the gospel, and belongs to that poverty of thought which takes no cognizance of the demerit of sin or the righteousness of God; knows nothing of the merit of His person as “the image of the invisible God,” and feels nothing of His infinite love and condescension which tasted death for every man.

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Not so the Apostle Paul: for he begins with the justice of God, and with no flesh justified in his sight he ends with the judgment of God, thus laying the ground for the atonement of Jesus Christ. With such premises and conclusion there remains now nothing but either the penalty or a legal equivalent for the penalty. Viewed from the standpoint of St. Paul (and of the common sense of mankind) therefore the death of Jesus Christ was the suffered penalty, or it was substituted as a legal equivalent for the penalty, or it was not an atonement for the sins of the whole world.

CHAPTER IX.

NECESSITY FOR AN ATONEMENT A LEGAL QUESTION REQUIRING LEGAL TREATMENT.

It is highly important that we distinguish between questions that relate to the need of an atonement and to the legal necessity for its being provided. What it was, what it does, and what it was intended to achieve are questions apart from the necessity which made an atonement an imperative requisite to the pardon of sin.

Love was the supreme motive that led to its provision: Sin the cause of its need: Salvation, with all the salutary benefits incidental to redemption, was the comprehensive objective of the atonement of Jesus Christ.

But the question which chiefly involves the legal aspects of the atonement faces, first, a condition presumed to exist in the moral government of God, which will not admit of any provision for the salvation of a lost world until principles of righteousness are propitiated or satisfied, or made to harmonize with the exercise of the divine prerogative of pardon.

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Those who will not hear of an atonement which has respect to the requirements of law seem to forget that sin is the transgression of the law, and that pardon remits the penalty which the law imposes. Love itself is the end of the law. "The end of the commandment is love, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." Law, faith, obedience, and love is the moral order of the divine government sought to be restored through our Lord Jesus Christ. Hence a redemptive method which ignores the fact of sin and the relation of love to law has no existence.

A discussion of the causes and conditions that lead to the atonement, and an answer to the question of its necessity to the pardon of sin involves legal treatment because it is a legal question. Reduced to its simplest form it amounts to this: First, "the law entered." "Thou shalt not" was the precept. Second, "all have sinned." Third, "shall surely die" is the penalty due. "But now" the justice of God is manifested without the execution of the penalty imposed by the law. How can this be without violating principles of righteousness in the moral government of God? Answer, "Through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation."

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Now let us hear the objector who would discuss an atonement without any regard to the question of law.

He has a mountain to climb, and must approach it by a circuitous route. Ordinarily he begins by telling us of the great changes that have come over the religious thought of the century. Of the “decay” of orthodox conceptions, of the more modern view, of the enlarged perceptions of the divine fatherhood, the deeper ethical coloring that has been infused into our thoughts, and the more worthy notions of God and the redemptive work of Christ.

Then he proceeds to clear the sky of old biblical imagry, and the rabbinical language of St. Paul and his Judaistic adherence, together with the influence of his Romanized legal environment which had its effect in throwing the whole scheme into a forensic form.

Then the preface is further adorned with a résumé of the antiquated theories which we have outgrown. The theory of Origen, with a propitiation to the devil, we are not allowed to forget, while the commercial ideas of substitution, sordid associations of the market, and the rigid inferences of Calvinism, and the mechanical conceptions of the universe administered as a law court

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unworthy the benign and reverent notions of God.

The brush goes along with the pencil, touching up here and there those dreadful conceptions that bulked so largely in the theology of that day; crude notions of the gospel of Christ, disgracefully inadequate; dreadful conceptions intolerable to contemplate; the new view, the modern idea; the better conception in the minds of thinking men; an entirely different conception was dawning; now we rarely hear, in the present day, such literal interpretations of the Pauline phraseology, etc. (These expletive phrases and complimentary terms are quotations. We furnish only the cement to bind them together.)¹

Such prefatory argument, expanded into a treatise (and there are many) obviates the necessity of an appeal to the New Testament.

The legal aspects of the atonement are simply ignored, and the New Testament phraseology suffers the rebuke of being outgrown.

For instance, the following: “Until recently

¹Shades of our fathers! If they could read these announcements, would they think we had unearthed new MSS.? Hardly; for they left us their libraries, and we find the same compliments and the same vein of new discoveries running clear back to Arianism. Old practitioners tell us that the science of medicine is the accumulated knowledge of the ages applied to the healing art. But what is theology! Those Athenians, who spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing (described in brackets in the seventeenth chapter of Luke), would have made great theologians!

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it was customary to regard this mainly under the form of a legal transaction. God was the judge in a law court: Christ was the advocate in behalf of the accused: The atonement was a procedure by means of which the guilty were acquitted: While the claims of retributive justice were fully satisfied.” “The atonement is now regarded more as the personal reconciliation of God’s disobedient children with their Father in heaven, and its process and results are considered in a more personal way and with more regard to ethical issues.”²

Just how such a definition of the atonement can be made intelligible, or be related to that subject, while it describes something else, is beyond our comprehension. But the effacement of all the legal aspects is clear.

A lawyer’s answer to all such subterfuge would be, “Yes, ‘t is a pity we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; but that ’s the book.” Such retort is more than facetious: For, aside from the facts as to St. Paul’s choice of legal terms and the forensic character of his argument, the authority of Christ for that judgment scene is sanction enough.

The objection which assumes to criticise the legal treatment of this subject “because it savors

²W. F. Adeney. “A Century’s Progress,” p. 130.

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too much of a court procedure," while aimed at the argument strikes the authorship of the New Testament, and a better compliment it would be hard to pay.

If, therefore, a view of the atonement savors too much of the Pauline method of presenting it, and too much of the adjudicature which the Savior proclaimed, the objector must bear the onus of it.

We will be glad if our treatment of the atonement does not savor too little of such procedure. If it did there might be room for just criticism; but by being too much like that raises the query as to whether or not it is too much like the truth.

We are not responsible for the words and terms employed, nor for the doctrine itself. We do not assume to improve on these terms, but if possible to interpret something of their meaning; and the objection we make to some other views of the atonement of Christ is that they are totally unlike that, "standing in no discoverable relation to the New Testament." (See Preface.)

The effort to belittle or render coarse and unworthy a doctrinal statement is not weighty if the logic of it goes far enough to include the authority of the Scriptures.

If it has any ground to stand on it must be put in terms that do not involve a challenge of the

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Word itself, else it deserves no consideration. In this particular instance the “court procedure” is asserted, and no objection to a court procedure can stand except as a denial of the authority of the Scriptures.

Then the argument addresses itself to another subject outside the question of an atonement, namely, the question of the authority of the New Testament. A denial of which authority cancels the demand for any atonement, except such as is compatible with the methods and interpretations of Rationalism—or blank infidelity.

Objections to a “legal view” of the atonement are usually put in such coarse terms and in such contrast with the metaphysical finesse of the thing substituted as modern, that we have no trouble to understand them. In one instance at hand we read that this view represents the Supreme Ruler as a “Justice of the Peace.” How clear that is! How unlike the words, words, words that lead us through pages and pages of book after book in search of an ethical atonement that is modern! It reminds one, part of whose rural youth was spent on a farm, of the fact that when one is lost in the woods he invariably travels in a circle, and happy is the man who comes out where he went in. A compass, or a New Testament,

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would be an invaluable guide. The law of gravitation requires the needle to point north, and law, grounded in the righteousness with which God is invested, demands obedience or penalty or “propitiation” as a substitute for the penalty. Neither atonement nor “ethics” has any reality or substance apart from law. And neither exegetes nor apostles nor modern theologians “nor any other creature” can unmake the order and constitution of nature, nor separate the idea of atonement from that of LAW. As well try to separate logic from the laws of thought, or the day of judgment from the “Judge of all the earth.” Either is an abandonment of the subject and the substitution of another predicate, the nature of which will be all the better if veiled in the obscurity of a disquisition that renders it incomprehensible.

It may be said in reply to this, that St. Paul does repudiate the law when he declares, “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested.”

We reply, if St. Paul means the law of Moses the meaning is clear. But granting that he refers to the higher law—the rule of right that obtains in moral government—he can not intend to ignore or repudiate that law. Dr. Adam Clarke interprets the phrase to mean, “Without any right or claim

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which might result from obedience to the law.” This is evidently true so far as it goes, and in keeping with the previous argument.

It is likewise capable of larger meaning, viz., without either obedience to the precept or the execution of the penalty. But granting so much as that, the law is not thereby ignored or set aside. Jesus Christ is set forth a propitiation. The law, which is grounded in the righteousness of God, demanding obedience or penalty, instead of being ignored or repealed is met by the death of Jesus Christ. In other words, the righteousness of God, sought to be manifested by the execution of the penalty, is manifested in another way, namely, by His death.

That law still obtains. His death substituted its penalty only for the remission of sins that are past, while the requirements of obedience to its precepts will run on forever.

St. Paul has anticipated this expression “without the law” in the preceding chapter (ver. 12), “For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law.” Assuming the term “without law” to mean without the law of Moses, which is the evident meaning, then by what law do they perish? It must be that they perish in obedience to the demand of some law. What law can

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that be but the rule of right which finds its ground and sanction in the righteousness of God? The Ten Commandments receive their highest sanction from the all inclusive law of righteousness, which neither Christ nor His apostles assumed to repeal. In the propitiation received by faith both are vindicated, and hence the apostle concludes, "Do we then make void the law? God forbid! Yea, we establish the law."

The next (4th) chapter is given to a discussion of faith in its relation to Christ; but in the last verse, returning to the profoundest depths of the legal problem, and laying bare the foundation upon which justification is to rest, he declares concerning Christ (verse 25), "Who was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification."

With the first verse of the next chapter (5th) the apostle begins to sum up the whole of his previous argument. It is therefore of all previous data, and embraces every element of the previous conclusions. "**THEREFORE** being justified by faith we have peace with God, **THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.**"

This is the capstone that crowns the legal superstructure, and with every legal requirement met we have access to all that was previously

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barred by our disobedience. Hence he continues, “By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”

After this St. Paul fairly revels in conclusions, wherfores, and thereforeses. “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” “For, if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.” “Wherefore as by one man sin entered . . . but not as the offense so is the free gift.” “Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came . . . even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came.”

How the great argument rises! From premises laid in the first chapter, step by step the great apostle conducts us through to that climactic Eighth of Romans, which he closes with a peroration that has never been excelled. Beginning with verse 32: “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall sepa-

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rate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

“As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Let us thank God that in the order of His providence this learned tent maker, this greatest theologian of the centuries, had not seen Rome when he wrote this epistle; and that the field was new and strategic, demanding a whole gospel; that no previous residence and ministry had absorbed his best thoughts, and so far utilized his preaching as to embarrass a repetition of great fundamentals. Thank God that in Romans we have a complete summary of apostolic preaching, matured by long experience and reduced to the compass of a single treatise by this master of logical arts.

The closing paragraphs are devoted to the ethical duties inherent in the Christian system, and to

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personal greetings. But the epistle would not be Pauline if it did not close with a climax, or a benediction, that strikes again the keynote of his gospel, like the last stroke of a pro-cathedral bell, rolling its good tidings out over the world with a wide welcome, in these last words: “Now to Him that is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known to all the nations unto obedience of faith: to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever. Amen.”

CHAPTER X.

LOVE AND LAW

ANY view of the cross which represents the death of Christ as an appeasement of the personal anger of God, and hence the atonement the cause of His love for sinners, would contradict itself by the admission that “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” to die for their redemption.

An absurdity too palpable to find place in any theory ever taught; and any objection against such theory is a gratuitous waste of time if it goes farther than a flat denial.

Nor does any theory of which we ever read make use of statements that by any fair inference could be construed as teaching such an incongruity. And yet, strange to say, the most common objection to a vicarious atonement is aimed at that kind of a theory.

If the objector would reverse his order, and think before he objects, it might occur to him that the absurdity of presuming that the atonement

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was the cause of the love of God and not the love of God the motive that provided the atonement, was so rudely plain that he must have been mistaken in his interpretation of what was meant to be taught.

It is one of the primary rules of criticism that an author must be allowed to be consistent with himself; whereas in this case the inconsistency is announced in the thing premised.

Neither the New Testament nor the advocates of a vicarious atonement furnish any warrant for such an imbecility, nor do they sanction a thing which on its face contradicts itself or the common sense of mankind, however persistent the effort to make it appear.

Between truth and error there is often but one step, and an enemy will always take that step to caricature or exaggerate the truth. Here as nowhere else in the realm of Christian doctrine the temptation is great, because the opportunity is afforded by the very terms employed.

It might be consistent for a devil worshiper to represent God as the implacable enemy of mankind who could only be appeased by the blood of His Son; and there might be some excuse for the ignorant and depraved to abase these terms and caricature the doctrine of a vicarious atonement,

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and call it therefore a barbarism and a relic of the ages of cruelty. But for men whose pretentious scholarship is far above such crass ignorance there is no excuse whatever. They know better. So much better that they are adepts at the art of making fine distinctions in the realm of scientific Biblical criticism. The mildest designation with which such misrepresentations can be charged legally is not "heresy," but "libel;" because when they knew that no orthodox doctor, or evangelical teacher in college, church, or Sunday school, ever taught such sentiments they treated them and the New Testament as if they did.

When that kind of an atonement which no theologian ever taught and which St. Paul never taught is urged against the Pauline doctrine as cruel and barbarous, the objector is placing himself in company with a class of men of a former age who had the candor to avow themselves as infidels.

In their defense it can be said that light was dim and truth was scarce. There was little general knowledge of the Scriptures, and they were influenced by false notions of Christianity; but now, when theology has come to be an exact science, and every truth falls by classification into its proper place, theological specialists should be held

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to strict account for the use they make of their materials.

We mean by these strictures more perhaps than appears on the surface, but what we shall say later with regard to methods will make our meaning plain.

In our search for reasons nothing can be admitted as true which would do violence to the common sense, or to those fundamental principles of right and righteousness that belong to the immutability of God. He certainly wants no motive to render Him propitious. But to render pardon possible in strict conformity to His justice, and the rights and interests of all His intelligent creatures, some manifestation of that justice is required which will render it consistent for Him to exercise His beneficent disposition toward those guilty of sin.

The righteousness of God and the love of God are not more congruous than the righteousness of God and the wrath of God. The same disposition that loves holiness must hate sin. That God can both love and hate at the same time is no contradiction; but the same holy disposition addressed to different and opposite things. He loves the soul—every soul—and any soul in rebellion or alienated from God by sin can not be regarded by

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infinite righteousness with the same complacent benignity as one in loving and loyal obedience to His holy law.

Any other view of the character of the Divine One would render His being something other than a holy person. It might comport with the pantheistic ideas of the “Absolute,” but not with the Supreme God of the Christian Scriptures.

St. Paul says the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness; and no matter what theory of the atonement we adopt, if we accept the authority of the New Testament as the word of God, it is as much the duty of one class of thinkers as another to reconcile the wrath of God to the love of God.

To our thinking, there is no contradiction, but absolute concord, and there is no incongruity in supposing that God hates sin.

Though He be a God of love, His love is righteous love and His wrath is righteous wrath. We mortals have so much of the hydrophobia of madness in our kind of anger that it is sometimes difficult for us to credit God with a wrath that is holy wrath and not a kind of personal resentment, while a wrath that would weep and bleed and die for sinners is hard to understand.

Doubtless we, in view of our limitations, can

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only form limited conceptions of any truth about God; and the wrath of God is a subject of such vast and solemn import that it holds for us a measureless meaning. Viewed in relation to the love of God which gave His only begotten Son, who gave Himself to suffer and die, it is hard to understand and harder to explain lest we explain it away. Whereas, instead of the contradiction which seems to exist between the wrath and the love of God, it is the contrast that renders the cross so unspeakably great as an exponent of the love of God. We can only rise to a just conception of its glory when we view the victim of sacrifice as God's manifestation of righteousness contrasted with the heinousness of sin and the dark background of the wrath of God against it.

The wrath of God is as much a fact as the love of God. Nor can we escape the mystery of the problem of evil by transferring it to the physical realm and denying the agency of Divine Providence in the history of the world. God is responsible for all law, natural as well as spiritual. And if the suffering and death that everywhere trails the path of sin is the consequence of broken law, it is His law; and antipathy to ungodliness belongs to the eternal moral order.

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The mystery of iniquity may always remain a mystery; but we do know that righteousness and obedience is eternal moral order, while unrighteousness—or disobedience to moral law—is discord, pain, and death to transgressors. The history of this world, with its riven rocks and reigns of terror, together with the more than shadowy intimations of a dark spiritual world of fallen angels and wretched demons awaiting a future and final judgment, point to some fearful visitations of the wrath of God in periods past, while revelation and the guilty consciences of wicked men prophesy a future “day of wrath and the righteous judgment of God.”

God is holy. He will not—He can not brook sin. His only treatment of it is extermination, and death is its only penalty. He means to have a holy universe. Infinite purity is not going to embrace the putrid corpse of a dead soul any more than the waters of the sea will assimilate the dead body cast upon it; not while wind and wave and tide and current conspire to keep its bosom clean.

The death of Christ did not appease the wrath of God. It was not meant to make any change in His personal disposition toward sin or sinners. His everlasting, implacable hatred of wrong and His constant, immutable, and eternal love of right

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was in no way changed or placated. “Justice and judgment are the habitations of His throne.”

St. Paul avers in the preface of the Epistle to the Romans—1:18—that “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.”

Every apostolic deliverance in the New Testament sounds an awful note of alarm—to flee from the wrath to come. In the Book of Revelation—6:16—we read of guilty men fleeing from the face of God and “the wrath of the Lamb.” Such truth is not congenial to a compromising gospel, nor with the gentleness typed in the figure of a Lamb. But it comports with the righteousness and rectoral wrath of a God of love, and with the justice that visits mercy spurned and love abused. (It may be that if we were holy enough to see as God sees and love as God loves, our own past transgressions would kindle within us a resentment for sin somewhat resembling holy wrath; at least enough to take the side of the Lamb in His judgment against incorrigible sinners.)

Says St. Paul (Ephesians 6:6), “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.”

The cross of Christ was not a compromise:

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Nor a wheel within a wheel, by which God could presume that He loved men when He hated them. He always loved the world of sinners, and deplored the guilt and delighted not in the death of any: But eternal, immutable righteousness must punish sin. He was not willing that any should perish, but could not consistently ignore the demerit of sin and pardon it. To justify sinners would justify sin and compromise God, and otherwise introduce a dangerous and no doubt ultimately a more damning precedent into the moral government of His intelligent creatures than the execution of the primary penalty which the law imposed.

To pardon sin and save sinners without violating principles of righteousness was therefore the governmental problem that confronted the divine love, and it could not be solved by any means less than the voluntary death of the Son of God.

This being true, the Father gave the Son and the Son gave Himself, coming as a ransom for us, to die in our stead.

Thus His death became a substitute for the penalty; adequately, lawfully, abundantly, and satisfactorily substituting the penalty, and thus declaring the righteousness of God, that He might be just and the Justifier of him which believeth

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in Jesus. But in the plainest terms of common parlance, it would have been wrong for God to overlook the transgression of His law, the announced penalty of which was death; and the pardon of a penitent sinner could not be justified without some adequate atonement for sin. Just as it would be wrong for God to justify a sinner who does not repent of his sins and receive the proffered benefit of the atonement by receiving Christ. The first He could not do for reasons stated, and the second He can not do for reasons that are apparent.

It was not a commercial transaction—that is, so much of the humiliation and suffering and death of the Divine Christ for so much more of the sufferings and death of human beings. The idea of exchange must not be carried into the realm of mathematical or commercial equivalents, except that one thing transpires instead of another. It is true that there is an *analogy* between the penalty and the substitute for the penalty, as we shall attempt to show later; but commercial ideas of the atonement have led to some very erroneous conclusions: Such as that Christ having paid the penalty for all men, it would be wrong for Him to exact it of some men again, etc.

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The death of Christ accomplished results that would otherwise have been impossible; but in our view of it, first of all it made it lawful and right for God to justify the ungodly and to establish that divine economy of redemption, which, with every legal barrier removed, placed the human race where every soul was made salvable.

It did not work any change in the mind of God, nor any other change in the soul of man than would have been wrought if the death of Christ had occurred at the beginning or at the end of the world. For be it remembered that grace—all grace, including the perpetuity of the race, the older dispensations of Divine Providence in the ancient world, the Mosaic dispensation (under types and shadows), as well as the present dispensation of the Holy Spirit, together with all the agencies, means, and materials employed in the moral renovation of man—was made possible “by the blood of His cross.”

The atonement is not a parenthetic innovation, standing midway in the scheme of providential government. It dates with the inception of that economy. The Lamb is conceptionally “slain from the foundation of the world.” It might satisfy our limited notion of things if it dated after the foundation of the world, but it dates before. “He

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is the Alpha as well as the Omega," and "all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made;" so that the Lamb of God was not only the surety for the outcome of free, contingent moral government, but God's justification for creating the world as the very theater of its operation.

Deep in the immensity of all being and entity, and above the reach of chance or change or contingency, and presiding over all dispensations of all worlds is the righteousness of God. Here is the anchorage of all hope, the assurance of all mortal and immortal well-being, and the final safety of all the works and worlds of God.

But the creation of a world and the inauguration of a moral government upon it implies peril. What if His creatures sin? What if free moral agents choose to violate their liberty?

What if the first guilty pair is summarily dealt with? What if their extinction had been the only penalty? Answer: The Eternal God has made His first mistake, and moral government is a failure. What if the penalty had only been the abandonment of man and the race is left without the light of life, to propagate, and prey upon each other until the last brutal remnant had become extinct, and an empty blasted earth had been left

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to roll on in utter moral oblivion? What a memorial of judgment to hang up in the sight of the universe as a declaration of the righteousness of God and of failure!

What if, instead of an abandoned earth, He had removed the first offenders and created another Adam under similar conditions of probation? He must be free to be accountable; and how many more experiments of this kind would it require to prove that righteousness, which is essential to all the highest ends of moral government, could not be secured by commanding what is right and condemning what is wrong—that is, by law alone?

To the eternal honor of His wisdom, God never failed nor intended to fail. All the hazards of free moral agency were met in the Mediator as provided in the “Eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus.” The penalty in full was not executed, but only in part and so far as the disciplinary requirements of moral government and the mortal and immortal interests of His creatures required that a visitation of the divine displeasure should serve as a perpetual memorial of the fall of man and the righteousness of God, reserving the final disclosure of the incarnation, the cross, and the resurrection to the “fullness

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of time," when with a full revelation of His law and the perpetual memorials of sacrificial atonement, He could gather the nations about the cross and consummate eternal redemption for us—not at the time of the fall of man; not deferred to the time of the end; not in the great day of His wrath: "But to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness; that He might be just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

"EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS."

The atonement of Jesus Christ was not an end of itself, but a means to an end: The end sought being the salvation of men. As the means of propitiation, the means of manifesting God's method of righteousness, and the means of subduing the hearts of men, it is indeed "the wisdom of God and the power of God." It served both to render salvation possible and then as chief among the means employed for its accomplishment.

RIGHTEOUSNESS; God's righteousness; God's method of righteousness, and the righteousness (or rectification) of men is the burden of the Book of Romans. When Paul says that Christ Jesus is set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness, that God

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might be just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus, he plainly avers two things, namely, that the death of Christ vindicated God in proffering salvation to men conditioned on their faith. These conditions are part of the instrument—the one as much as the other. In other words, the righteous God will rectify sinners conditioned on the atonement and their acceptance of it, thus agreeing with that old maxim of law, that “without the shedding of blood there is no remission,” and recognizing a fundamental fact in moral government, namely, that men who are free to sin are also free to remain sinners and to suffer the consequences.

No atonement can be made that does not justify God in extending clemency to the guilty and recognize at the same time the free agency and personal accountability of human subjects.

When the apostle says, “But now the righteousness of God is manifested without the law, being witnessed by the law and the prophets,” he evidently refers to the Jewish sacrifices ended with the one Great Offering and to the testimony of all the prophets, from Moses to John; when, as Peter says, “The Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should

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follow" (1 Peter 1:11). Take, for example, that great epitome of atonement found in Daniel's prophecy: "Seventy weeks are determined upon Thy people and upon Thy holy city to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy" (Dan. 9:24).

What a voice from the depths of the years witnessing to the great "reconciliation" and to the "bringing in of everlasting righteousness!" Not the reconciliation of a Holy God to unholy men, but reconciling the everlasting righteousness of God to the justification and sanctification and glorification of sinners, and thus restoring them to the eternal moral order without the violation of a single principle in the moral government of God and giving them, through Christ, a salvation grounded in the everlasting righteousness of a Holy God.

A lost world and the love of God to the rescue would be tragedy enough to employ the celestial harps forever. But that the Sinless One should be delivered by the "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" and be taken and by wicked hands crucified and slain, is the most start-

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ling wonder of the universe. A wonder which from its very nature inspires in every thinking mind the question, Why the necessity? The only rational answer must be one that will recognize some PRINCIPLE, either in the moral government of God or otherwise involved in the issue of redemption itself which rendered it impossible for God to save men without the sacrifice of His Son. And to this the New Testament agrees. That impossibility, as we have seen, was searched to the utmost limit in the prayer of Gethsemane, and the cup could not be removed.

Now, what is there in the nature of redemption itself which required the death of Christ as the only possible means? Surely God is not limited in resources and could have provided other means to effect the ends of salvation? All things are possible with God.

But while things predictable of wisdom and power are possible with God, things involving the violation of a principle are not. And when the Scriptures plainly announce that the purpose of Christ's death was that God might be just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus, we have found the one great principle involved in the marvelous deed: THAT GOD MIGHT BE JUST.

Now, eternal honor to the integrity of our God:

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Eternal glory to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: Our redemption was not a concessional clemency at the expense of everlasting righteousness! The perpetuity of our existence as immortal beings is not more sure nor laid in better terms than the charter of our redemption, which was “wrought out,” the “price” paid, the life “laid down” by Him “who, once in the end of the world, offered Himself without spot to God through the Eternal Spirit.”

Had our salvation been the mere charity of a love which pity or the prerogative of an indulgent father provides, it could just as easily be revoked and the saints would forever face the hazard and live in the eternal jeopardy of their lives.

But now, Jesus having died to make it consistent with the justice of God to save sinners, every saved sinner can stand up with the babes in heaven and among the elder children of eternity with a clean record and claim the prerogatives of sonship with as clear a title to everlasting righteousness as the celestial sons that never sinned. St. Paul often strikes a note that chords with this. In 2 Tim. 1:9 we read, “Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ

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Jesus before the world began.” Truly it was not according to our works, but it was nevertheless a merited pardon—merited by Him who made the one sacrifice for sin forever. We have thus “a right to the tree of life,” and through Jesus Christ a warrant grounded in the immutable justice of God.

We conclude this chapter with a quotation which confirms what we have tried to prove. The wonder is that St. Paul could crowd so much of great thought into the space of the eleven verses of Colossians 1:12-22:

“Giving thanks unto the Father who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son: In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the Head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the first-

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born from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell: And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprovable in His sight.”

CHAPTER XI.

THE SIMPLICITY OF THE ATONEMENT.

“The atonement which reason can prove is needed, Revelation declares has been made.”—JOSEPH COOK.

We hear much about the mystery of the atonement, and scarce anything with reference to its simplicity. In this chapter let us survey the ground and emphasize only the things that appeal to our understanding.

The supreme test of any system of philosophy is its harmony with the nature of things: Will it fit in with the facts as we know them? The story of the fall of man, which has been the butt of so much ridicule on the part of skeptics and of patronizing dissent on the part of sciolists, and of some critics of the cosmogony of Moses, is notwithstanding the most natural thing that could occur—as a contingency most probable. It is an unworthy view of the divine purpose to suppose that God would create man defective in moral sense, or that he should not be free to choose between right and wrong. If so, the peril of such creation inheres in man’s endowment: and it extends to every one thus endowed, to the latest accountable creature.

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When we see a railroad wreck, with the track torn up, the locomotive in the ditch, and the cars splintered, we at once infer that some law has been broken: not merely the arbitrary rules of the road, but some law of physics as immutable as gravitation. Nor do we hastily infer that it was any part of the intention of the men who built that road to have that wreck. In the light of human history the same is true. There has been a wreck. Some law has been broken. If man was made, as everything else apparently was, to glorify his Maker and serve some divine purpose, he has “come short of it.” History with its long, dark catalogue of sin and shame, of crime and cruel abominations, of age-long struggle between the powers of light and darkness, proves that the race of man is not subjected to conditions of necessity, nor fitted into the harmonious mechanism of an eternal moral order; as indeed it certainly would have been if God had held its conduct and destiny in His own keeping.

Indeed such is the harmony between the Book and the facts as we know them that we would view with suspicion any philosophical account of the race that did not begin with the “Fall of Man.” For either some epochal and distinctively contingent calamity has fallen to his lot, or hu-

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manity along the line of its ages on earth has wandered away from the standards requisite to its pre-intended birthright and calling.

SIN.

Sin is not an entity—a thing. The evil of sin is not visible and tangible, so that it can be shown. The demerit of sin can only be shown by its punishment. The suffering of some adequate and exemplary penalty alone would proclaim both the evil of sin and the divine abhorrence. We can not conceive any method by which God could exhibit the character of sin as it is and manifest both His righteousness and His uncompromising abhorrence of sin that would not involve punishment.

Certain it is that God has appended to the violation of His laws the most fearful visitations of retributive justice. And notwithstanding all that He has done for the amelioration of the race, mankind has been woefully punished. By the withdrawal of His presence, and through the debasing nature of sin itself, the state of man is rendered a ruin, the nature of which we will not discuss. It is sufficiently expressed in the Hebrew word for sin, which means to miss the mark. If, as we have seen, man was created for some high

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and holy purpose, he has forfeited his being by becoming useless for the purpose of his original destiny.

While these general truths are so well known as to seem commonplace, it is not so well known that the primary penalty, duly announced and everywhere recognized in the Scriptures as the only primary penalty, was death. The law of righteousness makes no compromise with sin, and a forfeiture of life, with all its endowments and the destiny primarily purposed, is the declared and the only logical penalty. Death is the logical penalty, not only because it was declared, but for reasons grounded in the divine character and in the character thus debased and disqualified for the ends of its being.

We come now to face the problem of recovery. This will appear if we raise the question of consistency. Would it be consistent on the part of the Lawgiver, either to ignore His law, or to modify its terms? Is the physical universe in every atom and every world to obey the laws of life and being, and exist in that obedience, while the moral exhibits an exception? Would it comport with the character of God, the nature of things, and the interests of moral government to ignore the penalty and extend the mercy of par-

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don to transgressors without some adequate, pertinent, and impressive manifestation of the divine displeasure? If the penalty was just and plainly declared, could the Supreme Being deny His word and violate principles of righteousness, by consenting to enter into covenant relations with man and on the terms of His own volition cancel his guilt and receive him again into favor?

Certainly He could not consistently do so. As we have before urged, the righteousness of God, the law declared, and the interests of moral government made it necessary either to inflict the penalty or to provide a substitute for the penalty, which substitute would be a full legal and moral equivalent for the penalty itself. Against the necessity for an atonement arising out of these conditions, it is sometimes urged that the infinite can not be limited and therefore can not be confronted by a necessity. We reply: Certainly, when abstractly considered, the infinite can not be limited. But when you add to that proposition another factor you change it entirely. God is not limited; but when He comes to create something, and conditions inhere in that something, He has limited Himself by the conditions thus created. For instance: That God might be just it was not necessary that He provide a propiti-

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ation; but that God might be just and the Justifier of the ungodly, it was necessary; that necessity being measured by the added term, “Justifier of the ungodly.” The same principle is involved in what Jesus said to His disciples after His resurrection, “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?” And again, in the same interview, “Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer,” etc.

It was imperative that Christ should suffer; not on the grounds of merit, but of consistency; and that consistency was necessary. Necessary to the divine character, both as declared in the law and in the prophets. To say, therefore, that the infinite can not be limited by a necessity is not merely to ignore all possible contingencies, but it is to deprive the Divine Being of that which every one of His moral creatures possesses, namely, freedom. God is not an infinite mathematical abstraction, nor an abstract absolute, but an “I AM.” Therefore, if He pleases to create conditions, make promises, and save sinners, He must abide by the law of consistency. Otherwise He is not the Jehovah of the Scriptures, but the god of a pantheistic philosophy.

From the first we find that God did not proceed to the recovery of man by the exercise of

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mere prerogative. He instituted a relevant, public, and impressive memorial, both of the fact of human sin, and the consequent forfeiture of life. He instituted an economy of grace suited to the demands of holy law, and ordained a providential process of education that would lead up to some just conception of the divine method of redemption through our Lord Jesus Christ.

From the first we find that sacrifice preceded prayer, and that in the opinion of all men of every race the shedding of blood was a prerequisite to the divine favor. "Without the shedding of blood no remission of sin" came to be a postulate of axiomatic verity. Whether the idea was received by revelation or from remotest tradition, it matters not. With the Jew it was by revelation; and the gross and horrid rites of heathenism are but perversions of the same primitive thought.

It is written, Lev. 17:11, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul."

In Ex. 12:13, of the blood of the Passover, it is written, "The blood shall be to you a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall

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not be upon you to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt."

Long anterior to the covenant of Sinai, which was sealed by the same token, wherever we find a worshiper, whether by some lone altar in the wilderness or in the stately ceremonial of tribes and nations, and down to the voice that cried, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" it was the blood that made possible an approach to God.

Certainly there could be no saving merit nor any spiritual value in the blood of a dumb creature, except as a symbol and a substitute. How far the Israelite could analyze the symbol and apply the sign to the thing signified we can not tell. But since the life of the transgressor was forfeited by sin, and the life of the animal was substituted, doubtless it appealed to his reason; and when he laid his hand upon the head of the victim and leaned thereon, he could not but feel his dependence upon the sacrifice for the divine favor and for reconciliation with God. It was as much an act of faith in the symbol which Jehovah had instituted as is the attitude of the Christian whose sole dependence for salvation is the Lamb of God.

The whole was but typical, and a better sacri-

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fice must be provided, both to render these efficient and to consummate a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; reserved for a later revelation.

According to the New Testament Scriptures the blood of Jesus was typified by all these ancient sacrifices, and His atonement was the ground of salvation to every being born of Adam. They were sufficient then as affording a basis of faith in Christ. They were promissory, and like promissory notes, they had to be redeemed. They were not the real atonement, but they represented the real atonement; and back of them was the righteousness of God.

The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to prove, illustrate, and enforce this truth. It is one of the most marvelous productions of holy writ, and is capable of an analysis showing the most perfect unity of design between the ritual of the Old Dispensation and the gospel of the New. For want of space, we are obliged to drop out of our design an attempt to do this and treat the Book of Hebrews with as much attention as we have given the Book of Romans. With any mind of candor there can be no question that the apostles of Jesus delivered to us a gospel of salvation “through faith in His blood” based and builded

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upon the holy oracles and ordinances of Israel; and those who deny or affect not to see any connection between the sacrifices of the Old Testament and the atonement of the New, distort the facts and treat the truth with violence.

Is it not a wonderful confirmation of the truth and divinity of the apostolic doctrine of the atonement that this unity runs through all the Scriptures, from the altar of Abel to the visions of the apocalypse of John? In the Book of Revelation the doctrine of the atonement flowers out in all the drapery of a gorgeous revelation. The book is the book of the "Lamb." He is the imperial presence in every vision. No such glorified personage ever astonished the gaze of mortal man as the appearance of Jesus, "walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks." Too overpowering to bear, John fell at His feet as dead. It is the Lamb that appears on Mount Zion. It is the Lamb that appears in the midst of the throne. It is the Lamb that prevails to open the book. Infernal coadjuvancies make war on the Lamb; the Lamb shall overcome them. From the first grand chorus that rolls its rapture to the throne saying, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us in His blood, unto Him be glory," through all the unfolding drama of voices and vials, and trum-

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pets and thunders, to the Marriage Supper, it is the Lamb that was slain. The Old and New Dispensations are blended in “the song of Moses and the Lamb.” They “overcome through the blood of the Lamb.” The “Book” is the Lamb’s Book of Life. They need not the sun, for “the Lamb is the Light thereof;” and the throne itself is “the throne of God and the Lamb.”

IMPORTANT DISTINCTIONS (ANALOGY).

The analogy between the penalty, as announced by the law, and the substitute for the penalty is perfect. Jesus tasted DEATH for every man. The meaning and the measure of that death we can not fathom. Death as it occurs in the order of nature is the separation of the soul and body. The dread of death is upon every creature. No stoical philosophy and no poetic fancy can rid us of the fear of death or rob the king of terrors of his renown. It is an enemy; “the last enemy.” Nothing but the grace of God can face it with indifference. Then there is a “second death.” It can not be less than the separation of the soul from God.

We know that the suffering Son of God surrendered His life; but beyond the approach of dissolution, which He could not fear, what means

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that loud and heart-rending cry, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me!” Here, alone with the intolerable burden of the sins of the world upon His heart, He died. The world’s Redeemer died!

It was not His life that atoned. It was not His obedience that atoned. It was His obedience unto death. It was not even His sufferings that atoned: It was His suffering of death that atoned for sin.

Truly the analogy between the death of Christ and the penalty, in every item except that of duration, was perfect. It was not the same. We can not make it the same, though we reckon His divinity over against the lack of duration. It was analogous. It was not the penalty: it was the substitute for the penalty. It is true that the value of the propitiation rises or falls with the question of the divinity of Christ; but divinity is not duration, and whatever the analogy, it is not the same.

We reject the Penal Satisfaction Theory of the Atonement for two reasons: First, we must not mistake analogy for identity, which the said theory does. Second, if we aver that Jesus suffered THE penalty, it leads logically to one of two errors, namely, either to a limited atonement, including

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the elect only, or to an universal atonement, including the salvation of all men, regardless of conditions. For if The Penalty has been suffered, it would not be just to require it again; and all for whom Christ died must be saved. Now, we know that the New Testament teaches an unlimited atonement, and makes the final salvation of accountable men to depend upon conditions, inclusive of both the atonement and their acceptance of Christ.

If, therefore, Christ died for all men, the atonement was a provisional expedient by which God might be just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. He did not suffer the penalty; but His suffering of death was a substitute for the penalty, and analogous only so far as it became Him “to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past” (Rom. 3:25). The only Scriptural warrant for a penal satisfaction (one that renders the atonement a *quid pro quo*—so much for so much) is found in the words and terms employed to express the idea of substitution.

Ransom, redeemed, bought with a price, the Just for the unjust, etc., imply substitution. Likewise many of our hymns and sacred songs chord with the same thought and are to be commended.

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But these words and terms are as much in accord with the idea of a substitute for the penalty as with a suffered penalty. The ideas are all related ones; and the fact that Jesus gave Himself for us, regardless of the manner of His death, is the root idea of redemption.

Failing to note these distinctions, and fearing the logical conclusions of a commercial exchange, some advocates of the Governmental Theory have lost sight of the element of satisfaction altogether. By placing the emphasis on public justice as the ground of necessity for an atonement, instead of the "righteousness of God," it may be a question whether the idea of satisfaction is sufficiently conserved. Whether it is or not will depend more upon our individual interpretation of it. Public justice, having reference to all the interests of moral government, must be broadened to take in the principle of justice as grounded in the righteousness of God, else it falls short of St. Paul's "that God might be just."

Both the terms, Satisfaction and Governmental, are happy and eminently suggestive: for the one is embodied in all redemptive nomenclature and the other puts the emphasis where it belongs in any discussion regarding the necessity for an atonement. But between the idea of a

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suffered penalty and a substitute for the penalty is all the difference between a judicial acquittal and a provisional propitiation by which God might justly acquit those who comply with its terms. We therefore assume the latter to be true of the atonement, and interpret St. Paul as teaching that justification is the judicial acquittal.

CHAPTER XII.

THEORIES OF THE ATONEMENT. VICARIOUS. TRUMPHANTORIAL.

WHAT must an atonement do to effect the possibility of pardoned sin? And, What must an atonement be to accomplish that end?

These are questions that chiefly concern us in this treatise; and to the first we reply that an atonement, aside from the many salutary ends sought to be secured by it, must be addressed to the hindrances which in perfect moral government render pardon otherwise impossible.

Since the impediment that bars the pardon of sin is the law, that rule of action which is grounded in the righteousness of God and which demands obedience or penalty, therefore the atonement must be one that will secure that obedience or suffer that penalty; or, it must render a legal equivalent for that penalty. (The law does not require both obedience and penalty—they are legal, not moral equivalents.)

The legal barriers are not removed by changing anything organic in moral government, but by meeting the requirements of law while extend-

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ing the benefits of pardon. Thus the divine character is unimpeached and the moral government of God is unimpaired.

What the atonement is—in answer to the second question—we reserve to later pages.

Our answer to the question of necessity for an atonement, both with reference to the demerit of sin and the interests of moral government, is applicable to any theory of a vicarious atonement which claims the sanction of the New Testament. If we are careful to distinguish between the governmental necessity for an atonement, which precedes the question of the salutary benefits growing out of the atonement, we will have no temptation to mix effects with causes. In logical order, the question of necessity must first be met and answered. Then the field is open for a study of the nature, the extent, and the mystery of the atonement.

THEORIES. (THEIR ANSWER.)

This primary question (of necessity) is attempted to be answered by all the evangelical theories of the atonement. It is ignored by all others; or if attempted, in a way that is intangible or irrelevant. That God might be just and the Justifier, is the answer of all theories of a VICARI-

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ous atonement. (The word “vicarious,” which is defined in general terms to mean “performed or suffered in the place of another,” has long been employed to designate an “orthodox” view of the atonement; and a denial of a vicarious atonement is understood to refer to all evangelical theories. The odium which attaches to it is well deserved. It belongs to the “offense of the cross,” and comes legitimately from those who deny that the atonement of Christ is the ground of salvation.)

The answer of the “Satan” Theory is a diversion! The answer of the “Penal Satisfaction Theory” emphasizes the retributive justice of God. The answer of the “Governmental or Rectoral Theory” rejects that view and places the demand in rectoral or public justice. The “Moral Influence Theory” (is non-vicarious) underrates the question by its attitude with reference to sin and affords no answer. Since in that view the atonement is not the ground of salvation, an answer is not needed.

Our answer to the question of necessity agrees with all the evangelical theories of the atonement in finding that the atonement was imperative and its necessity grounded in the justice of God. And we do not see how it is possible to maintain any atonement that can properly be

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called an atonement, claiming the sanction of the New Testament, and place it on any other ground.

By ignoring the proper definition of words and terms, or by torturing them out of all meaning, an ingenious logic may build an atonement on anything else, but it can by no means escape the charge of having abandoned the New Testament.

It seems to us to involve the question as to whether or not the death of Christ was an atonement for sin; and the answer must be either affirmative or negative. If it is negative, it is a flat denial of the text. It is perfectly natural that we should differ as to the nature of the atonement—what it is and what it does—else we would learn nothing from each other; but a denial of the fact, even by implication, is a denial of the Scriptures.

We contest no rights; but forasmuch as some have supposed that an evangelical treatment of the subject is antiquated, we stand by the logic of these statements and challenge all critics.

That God might be just and the Justifier can not be controverted therefore, though it be susceptible of many interpretations.

Our own among the rest may need the revision of a thousand years of light and study to bring it up to where St. Paul saw into its heights and

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depths; and though we may felicitate ourselves that the world will have to grow that much older to do it, it may be, that after all the simplest and most common sense view will best chord with the New Testament.

Systematic Theology made a bad start with its atonement theory, but an acquaintance with the methods employed by its reputed author dispels every element of surprise.

ORIGEN (A. D. 185-253?), the Father of Biblical criticism and exegesis, was one of the worthiest of the Christian Fathers. It is said—see McClintock & Strong, Art.—that no man did more to settle the true text of the sacred writings and to disseminate and expound them. His labors and acquisitions, accomplishments and sufferings were prodigious, and he was justly celebrated by both Christian writers and heathen philosophers. Jerome called him a man of immortal genius; and it is true that his fame and influence has endured for ages. His talents, eloquence, and learning; his unyielding integrity and the voluminous products of his incessant labors, in the midst of persecution and almost constant personal peril, have earned for him the credit of being “one of the greatest moral prodigies of the human race.”

But whether from a defect of his peculiar

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genius, or the fault of his early education and environment, he applied to the interpretation of the Scriptures a wrong method, namely, the Allegorical method, which had been used to interpret the heathen mythologies.

Perhaps so great a man needed such defects to make his memory human or to keep him humble in heaven. We do not know; but certain it was that later—in the fourth century—some of his interpretations led to violent controversies in the Church, and others have continued to embarrass his successors to the present day by giving opponents occasion to discredit the doctrines of the New Testament.

Fortunately for the early period of Christianity, the fathers were too busy preaching the gospel and being persecuted to formulate theories. The New Testament furnished all the needed formula for those times, and among Christians the fact of the atonement and the relation between the death of Christ and the pardon of sin were not in dispute. From the earliest times we find that doctrinal disputation centered in the Person of Christ, and continued thus to be the subject of interest until “after this was settled by the general prevalence of the Nicene Creed.” Christianity was a thing of too much life not to pro-

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voke controversy, but the vicarious sufferings of Christ seem to have been so fully taught in the New Testament and so thoroughly stamped upon the gospel as its very life that it was less a matter of theological inquiry than of the acceptance or rejection of the gospel itself. That the atonement was not scientifically apprehended for two or three centuries after the crucifixion is no reproach to the thinkers of that period. Science itself has nothing to boast. Some of her thinkers were great, but her theories have all had to be revised. The miracle of all is seen in the fact that about A. D. 58 a learned tent-maker could write the Book of Romans and give the world a theory of the atonement that has kept the thinkers busy to the present time, and doubtless will dominate the common sense of mankind until Christ is seen coming again with His angelic hosts trampling the clouds of the sky.

We presume we will never be permitted to forget that the theory of Origen and his school represented the death of Christ as a satisfaction rendered to Satan. The reminder occurs with almost every attack upon a vicarious atonement. Satan or a satanic skeleton stands in the background as a memorial of the folly of the fathers who preceded our fathers in teaching the barbarism of a

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substitutional atonement. Fortunately for our fathers that satanic affair was laid to rest about one thousand years ago—to be exact, in A. D. 1098, when the “triumphantorial” theories received their quietus by Anselm’s publication, “*Cur Deus Homo,*” when theology began to put on something like a scientific aspect.

The fanciful notions of Origen and his school are not limited to the atonement, but in all his hermeneutic work the imagination plays an important part—sometimes to an extent almost beyond fancy. And, no wonder. Christianity grew up in the shade of heathenism. All the wealth of the world and most of the culture in flourishing systems of philosophy belong to heathenism, and until Christianity had won its way to the throne of the Cæsars they exerted a dominant and a domineering influence. After that scepter departed another took its place and Christianity itself began to be vitiated.

St. Paul had arrayed the preaching of the cross against the wisdom of this world as foolishness with God, and he warned the Church to “beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the elements of the world and not after Christ.” He set a good example by discarding the philosophies

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of his day; and truth justifies us in saying that he laid a broad hand on the history of philosophy when he said, “Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” (Col. 1:20.) “Where is the wise? Where is the scribe?”

It is no discredit to the Christian thinkers that to this day they have sought to harmonize the gospel with the “assured findings” of science and philosophy: But sometimes they have been mistaken as to the findings, and sometimes as to the methods employed. Origen was brave enough to deny and combat the errors he saw, in the face of impending martyrdom; but he was not wise enough to see the folly of the methods of interpretation then in vogue. Methods which received no sanction whatever from the Scriptures—unless St. Paul’s allusion to Sarah and Hagar (“which things are an allegory”) may be quoted as an exception, and which, when applied to the doctrines of the New Testament, led as far astray as truth could go without contradicting itself; and in some instances it did even that.

The Satan theory, of which we find traces in Irenaeus,¹ and which culminated in the specula-

¹Irenaeus—A. D. 180—represents the sufferings of Christ as made necessary by the hold Satan had on man, and in order to a rightful deliverance from that bondage. But in Origen—230—the ransom paid to the devil comes out fully; to which he added fanciful notions of the value of the blood of the martyrs. It was reserved to Gregory of

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tions of Gregory of Nyssus, has now no advocates, and the interpretations of Origen are ancient ruins. We would not be quoted as defending the theory nor as endorsing the vagaries that Origen taught; and yet there was more of good than evil in it. His theory of the atonement was much nearer in approach to the New Testament than some modern philosophical theories that have been born and died since the Reformation. He did not by implication ignore or deny the Scriptures. It was at least in theory and in fact an atonement. It was a vicarious atonement. It took due notice and account of the demerit of sin. It was not a limited atonement. It was triumphatorial, agreeing with that New Testament text which says that Christ died “that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the Devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were

Nyssa—370—to affirm that Satan was cheated in the transaction, and this was justified in view of his deception of men. But, prior to the time of Irenaeus, from the fragments that have come down to us we find some of the fathers giving a better report. Among them, Barnabas, Clement, and Polycarpe. In Justin Martyr—147—the satanic idea is not found. Athanasius—370—cotemporaneous with Gregory of Nyssa, rejected the Satan theory. It does not appear to receive much emphasis with others. Gregory the Great—590—is credited with having treated the doctrine of the atonement with something like scientific precision, and from that time we find little of interest added until the time of Anselm, to whom we have referred. It is worthy of note, however, that though mixed with error and loaded with incongruities, the atonement taught by the Church fathers was a vicarious atonement. Their vagaries and errors only serve to show the awful gulf into which theology would be plunged but for the New Testament to which it is anchored, and the common sense with which God has endowed most men.

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subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14). It did not detract from the divinity of Christ. It did affirm that justice was propitiated, and it was an atonement for sin. If, therefore, the purpose of the gospel was to make the bad good rather than to make the good better, it was practicably a better atonement than that of the modern Moral Influence theory, because it was a workable theory.²

If, then, this theory of the atonement which we repudiate was buttressed and bracketed with so many supports, wherein was it weak? And what was the organic difficulty? We reply, first of all, it erred in that particular which is the vulnerable point of all theories of the atonement, namely, in its answer to the question of necessity. It met the question of necessity with this answer, *i.e.*, "that God might be just."

So far it was right; and the only objective needed to complete the sentence and the sense, making it perfect, is the next clause, "and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." The phrase, "that God might be just," contains in itself the dependent conditioned objective; and the added "just to Satan," or just to any other objective notion, is extraneous.

²Wonder what the Salvation Army would do with a purely ethical atonement!

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True, the completed sentence is only the text of the New Testament; but the theory—any true theory—consists in an interpretation of the clause which reads, “that God might be just.”

In this the theory failed; and, virtually ignoring the fact that some principle in the moral government of God rendered it inconsistent with His justice to justify the ungodly, and placing the emphasis upon the rest of the sentence, it went astray.

It is hardly just to the memory of a dead theory to pass over its virtues in silence and treat only its faults, but if it serves the cause of truth we are justified in utilizing its defects as a warning. Therefore, to make it perfectly clear as a warning, let it be tested by the Word. Baldly stated, the theory appears to have been that the death of Christ was a ransom to Satan, that God might be honest and redeem the world from his possession. Now, there can be no manner of doubt that our deliverance from his dominion and the destruction of Satan are among the salutary benefits achieved by the death of Christ. The New Testament is clear and profuse with such declarations of the ultimate purpose of redemption. Not so clear in regard to matters that belong to the kingdom and power of darkness itself,

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but with reference to the destruction premised and the deliverance promised. In mercy to us, much that would gratify our desire for knowledge is veiled from us. Perhaps for the reason suggested in Romans 16:19, 20, “I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil: and the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.”

“The Greeks seek after wisdom,” and when they were introduced to Jesus He gratified the quest of “certain” of them by referring to His approaching death in the use of these words—John 12:31—“Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out; and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.” Then, as if to leave no manner of doubt as to what Jesus meant, the writer adds, “This He said, signifying what death He should die.” Then again, in 1 John 3:8, we read, from the same John, “For this purpose was the Son of God manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil.” In the Epistle to the Hebrews—Heb. 2:14—the death of Christ is made the instrumental cause of that destruction, viz., “that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil,” etc.

The Book of Revelation is but one great drama

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of struggle between the powers of light and darkness, and though much of it is revealed in symbols and veiled in splendors too brilliant for doctrinal interpretation,³ it is plain to be seen that it is an apocalypse of the mediatorial triumphs of Jesus over sin and Satan. The imperial presiding presence in every scene of struggle and triumph is the slain Lamb. The victory of Michael and his angels over the Dragon and his angels is His victory. Chapter 12:11—“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.”

The judgment of her on whose “forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH;” and of the “scarlet colored beast full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns,” and all the infernal coadjuvancies represented by these awful symbols is recorded in chapter seventeen, verse fourteen, in these words: “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is the Lord of lords and the King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful.” A record that has made princes tremble and popes uneasy under a triple crown, lest perchance its

³This must be understood as applicable to minutia. The hermeneutic value of the Book of Revelation is not in question. It is full of inspiring topics of doctrinal value and evangelistic interest.

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lesson of lurid terror was meant for them, by the “Word of God,” who “treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (19: 15).

That ancient text in Genesis which declared that the seed of the woman “shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel,” was like a seed wrapped in the cerement of a mystery that no mortal could penetrate until, after four thousand years of burial, it sprang up a tree of life. And now, after twenty centuries more, we are beginning to see that the only effectual bruising that Satan ever had came from the tread of this crucified and conquering Redeemer—the slain Lamb.

But now, returning to the theory which made the death of Christ a ransom to Satan—the fault of that theory is seen in the fact that it sought a ground for the necessity of atonement in the results achieved by it, instead of locating that necessity in the righteousness of God. Taking the words, “that God might be just and the Justifier,” as the text to be interpreted, it looked forward to the deliverance of men and the overthrow of evil which belong to the redemptive agencies of the cross as the answer to the question of necessity; whereas, all these belong to the salutary effects indicated in the last part of the clause, viz.,

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“and the Justifier,” and not to the first part, viz., “that God might be just.”

So far as we know, God could be just and deal summarily with Satan (except to pardon him), but it would not comport with His justice to justify sinners, nor establish the redemptive economy which in the vast compass of its purpose includes not only the deliverance of men, but the destruction of the devil and his angels. Therefore, to find the necessity for the death of Christ in the achievements of the cross—as this theory did, and as all so-called ethical theories do—is to err, either by ignoring the justice of God as the ground of necessity, or by grafting on some extraneous objective foreign to the right answer.

That little word “*AND*” is the nexus that binds together two different worlds of thought. The answer to the question of necessity resides in the words, “to declare His righteousness, that God might be just.” The nexus must not be crossed, else we leave behind the one great thought which by apostolic authority reveals to us the divine imperative.

To affirm that the need of the death of Christ—the atonement—is seen in the benefits that grow out of it, is only to say that the benefits which proceed from the atonement justify the wisdom of

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God in providing it. But it does not answer the question of imperative necessity which made the death of Christ a condition to the forgiveness of sins. Books would not contain the reasons for the need of an atonement. They are measureless as the mercies and boundless as the benefits of redemption; but they do not answer the question, "What must an atonement do to effect the possibility of pardoned sin?"

An atonement must, first of all, reconcile the fundamental principles of moral government to the prerogative of pardon. It is a necessity. A legal necessity, grounded in the righteousness of God, and growing out of the just requirements of a perfect moral government, in which pardon without an atonement is forever impossible. If, as we maintain, the answer of St. Paul is the true answer, viz., to declare His righteousness, that God might be just," then some vital principle in the moral government of God forbade the pardon of sin without a propitiation. That principle is the righteousness of God: Inherent in His holy Being: Fundamental in moral government: Declared by His righteous law, which demanded obedience or death. Then, if pardon and all the benefits reckoned with redemption are to be conferred on the guilty, the penalty or a legal equiva-

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lent for the penalty—a propitiation—must first be provided; “to declare His righteousness, that God might be just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

A superficial glance at St. Paul’s climactic—“that God might be just”—and the ample use we have made of it may suggest the thought that our argument is built on a single text, too narrow for the foundation of such logical sequences. In reply, we call the reader’s attention to the fact that three chapters precede that text, and it is the conclusion and climax of St. Paul’s great argument: Which, like Mount Everest, supported by five miles of solid granite, is rooted in the everlasting rock. Lo! it stands, pedestal, base, shaft, capital, architrave, frieze, and cornice, a logical column: Architectural, ornamental, and majestic, embedded in the eternal, immutable righteousness of God.

This is not a mere proof text. Take this out, remove this column, and the Book of Romans would be destroyed. Like the Parthenon—its beauty marred, its glory gone, and its amplitude a ruin.

CHAPTER XIII.

THEORIES OF THE ATONEMENT. THE SATISFACTION AND THE RECTORAL THEORIES.

IT is not our purpose to furnish an exhaustive summary of theories, nor to plow up the whole ground, and attempt an analysis and dissection of all the old, dry doctrinal bones of theological controversy. In our view, the question, What must an atonement do to render the pardon of sin possible? is attempted in every theory of a vicarious atonement. Having treated one theory with reference to that question and found it wanting, it remains that we pursue the search with some others in the same behest.

It will be profitable now to question briefly three, namely, the Satisfaction, the Rectoral or Governmental, and the Moral Influence Theories, and to try them by their answer to the one great interrogative.

Perhaps a reason why so many persons disavow their understanding of the atonement is because they have not made a study of any one

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phase of it; particularly the one under discussion, which is vital to the subject and will determine the truth and hence the value of any theory. If there is "an element of truth in every theory," it should be possible to find it if the criteria is the New Testament—though we confess that this charitable view is hard to reconcile with any two theories which contradict each other on questions that are vital to the life of a theory: If indeed it is possible to believe there is any truth in a theory the basis of which is a denial of the New Testament and a challenge of its authority; though we grant that truth may sometimes be found in juxtaposition with error, and accept the maxim—*cum grano salis.*

THE SATISFACTION THEORY.

The law of God required obedience or penalty, and when man by transgression lost his amenability to the one, the other was demanded; therefore the atonement was addressed to a satisfaction of that demand.¹ Satisfaction is a good word

¹If from this statement it is inferred that man ever ceased to be amenable to the precept of the law, the inference is correct. "Dead" is the legal status of a sinner. He is amenable to the penalty. It is only through the great atonement that he lives, that pardon is extended and that his amenability is restored. "The law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth"—Rom. 7. The penalty for sin is an absolute forfeiture. The giving of the law from Sinai's awful summit, and the obedience which it enjoined, was an overture of mercy made possible by the eternally purposed atonement.

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with which to express the idea of an atonement. So is also the word Substitution, as sometimes employed for the same purpose. They emphasize the fact that Christ died for us. The word Redemption, of frequent use in the New Testament, describes the same fact in nearly the same way. All theories of a vicarious atonement are satisfaction theories; but in what is called the “Satisfaction Theory” the word is meant to be more than a mere nominal designation. The satisfaction theory as Calvinistically interpreted is a penal satisfaction theory, and the death of Christ satisfied the retributive justice of God to which the guilty were amenable. He suffered THE PENALTY.

The obedience and death of Christ is substitutional—for the elect—and the vicarious work of Christ was the real and absolute equivalent for that which the transgressor owes to God and His justice. Sin with its guilt being imputed to Christ, by His payment of the debt the elect are redeemed in full. His obedience, as exhibited in His sufferings and death and His righteous fulfillment of the law, is imputed to them. The terms, “His life a RANSOM,” “that He might REDEEM us”—both words from *λυτρόω*—being interpreted literally and applied in the same sense as an exact commercial equivalent. If therefore Christ has suffered the

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penalty, it follows that all for whom He thus atoned are in strict justice exempted from the penalty which the law imposes upon the guilty. The grace thus shown is in God's gift of His Son and His acceptance of the substitute, rather than in the actual bestowment of salvation. This conclusion requires but a universal atonement to include a universal salvation: For it would not be just to exact the penalty after it had been borne by an accepted substitute.

It is doubtless against the "juridical," "mechanical," and "absolute" of this theory that most all of the objections to a vicarious atonement are hurled; both those which are coarse and fulminating, and those which are wrought of theological controversy. And yet it has been advocated by many learned and pious men. Its necessity is grounded on the justice of God. It is in part at least supported by pillars of strength standing on pedestals of truth which have taxed the strength of many a Samson, and they are standing yet.

The Satisfaction Theory relieved of some of its most objectionable features has been greatly modified by Moderate Calvinists, and what is to-day held as a satisfaction theory by a majority of evangelical theologians bears slight resemblance to the penal satisfaction theory above re-

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cited: So much so that it is impossible to do it justice in general terms. Indeed, with the exception of one distinctive feature—and its logical inferences—it is difficult to distinguish between the more modern view of the satisfaction theory and the governmental view itself; the so-called “Edwardian Theory” of the atonement being substantially the Arminian theory.²

It is not in our plan to discuss the doctrine of election as applied to the atonement; nor to pursue the conclusions to which we have referred as untenable, any farther than they may be related to this question, namely, the question of satisfaction. In our view the satisfaction theory, however modified or modernized, can not escape the conclusions of an “absolute” atonement, if it continues to affirm that Christ suffered the penalty which was due the guilty. The one distinguishing feature which renders the penal satisfaction theory such an exact and absolute substitutional theory, and which drives logically to the untenable conclusions so apparent, is grounded on the supposition that Christ suffered THE penalty which the law imposes: And, any theory which defines His death as the penalty, rather than a substitute for the penalty, must lead logically to these same con-

²Bibliotheca Sacra—1865.

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clusions—whether it be a limited or an unlimited atonement.

It is a serious thing to controvert an interpretation of the doctrine which has borne the sanction of many of the best minds of Christendom during a period of the most progressive evangelism. A theory that has numbered among its adherents millions who found in it what they interpreted the Holy Scriptures to mean. It grounded the necessity for the death of Christ in the eternal immutable righteousness of God, and is therefore infinitely to be preferred to an ethical atonement, which is as near next to none as nothing can be and be called a theory of the atonement. Indeed, the one great all-absorbing, soul-moving question after all is the fact of an atonement, and the yes or no of its being a ground of human salvation. Tested by the great try-square of the New Testament, common sense, and demonstration, it was right in that particular, and it cheered the faith of multitudes on their way to heaven. It is pretty safe to say that the theory itself must have embodied the bulk of evangelical truth at any rate; and if error is found in it, it is not the wholesale error which the opponents of a vicarious atonement affect. To repudiate the whole of a philosophy which comprehends an interpretation of Christ's

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finished work, from the question of its necessity to the question of adjustment in a series of revealed truth, and brand the whole as error, is to ignore by wholesale what able and pious men have accomplished in the spread of the gospel by the means which they employed.

Then, too, the presumption is aggravated when the objector himself fails to furnish a theory which perfectly satisfies all the demands of a better one. The admission on the part of wise men that no one theory contains all the truth which a comprehensive statement seems to demand; and the assertion of others that there are elements of truth in all theories, would seem to add sanction to these views. Therefore it seems to us that an approach to the study of the theory under review would better employ itself first in finding the truth it contains, than to begin with the idea of demolishing the theory itself.

Satisfaction is a good word. It chords with much that in the New Testament and in our Christian formulas of creed and hymn expresses the thought of atonement—"and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

The sense in which the atonement made satisfaction for sin and met all the legal and moral claims involved is the question in dispute. That

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the satisfaction was the judicial infliction of the penalty, with the imputations involved, is not defensible; but, in lieu of the penalty itself, and as a substitute for the penalty, the death of Christ satisfied all the legal and moral requirements which the righteousness of God and the interests of moral government demanded, that God might be just and the Justifier of the ungodly, is the satisfaction which justifies the use of the word and gives endorsement to every hymn which sings "Jesus paid it all." In our view, the Satisfaction Theory fails to distinguish between what the law required of man and what Jesus did to meet that requirement in our stead; and His death was not in fact and in every respect a suffering of the penalty (but analogous thereto), a substitute for the penalty.³

³"Some of the most distinguished writers, who are worthy of the veneration accorded them, object to the word 'satisfaction' in this connection, as if it necessarily carried with it the objectionable idea of the infliction of the penalty on the divinely appointed substitute, but we do not so understand it and do not think the Church intends any such meaning to attach to it. Our good Dr. Miley was too easily frightened at the use of this word and failed to strengthen his position and his generally admirable argument for vicarious sacrifice by swinging so far away from the word 'satisfaction.' He conceded far too much to the defenders of penal atonement by admitting almost all they claim as the meaning of satisfaction. We prefer to use the word as the Church uses it, and find its use perfectly consistent with our conception of an atonement which is not penal, but is ample in its provision to meet its exact purpose."—Bishop S. M. Merrill, "Atonement," pp. 66, 67.

CHAPTER XIV.

THEORIES CONTINUED. THE GROUND OF NECESSITY. THE RECTORAL THEORY.

THE test of any theological formula which may be proffered as a “theory” of the atonement, is its treatment, not of the nature of the atonement in general, but the ground of its necessity. Necessity being predicated of the atonement provisionally. Not that God was under any necessity to provide an atonement.

A formula may be philosophical without being theological. Philosophy employs as the basis of its investigation the ideas derived from natural reason, having for its subject any chosen object. Theology superadds to the principles of natural reason those derived from authority and revelation. (See McClintock & Strong, Art. Theosophy.) When a theory treats of the work of Christ by a method which ignores or denies the authority of revelation, its findings belong rather to the field of philosophy than of theology; for the distinction between the two belongs both to the method of

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reasoning and to the subject upon which it dwells. Strictly speaking, then, a theory of atonement which is the product of a method that negatives the authority of the Scriptures belongs to the science of philosophy rather than to that of theology. And whether the subject be a real atonement or not must be determined by a proper definition of the word itself.

There are theories, however, which may be termed fractional formulas. Deliverances which never approach the main question. Then, too, there are things and thoughts which belong to an edifying discourse about the atonement, which are more theological than scientific; seizing upon some feature of the mediatorial work of Christ or His federal headship, and applying it to the salvation of the race; with here and there inferences taken from the penal satisfaction theory and the moral influence theory, just as they seem to fit and fill out the figure or formula.

There are others, the chief virtue of which is ingenuity, or to be less exacting in the use of words, perhaps the virtue is originality; the only point of special agreement being an admission, which is evidently true, that to each author the atonement is a great mystery.

Not every modern presentment is a metaphys-

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ical novelty by any means, but it is generally true that an evasion or denial of the ground of necessity requires a substitute, and that substitute is usually some salutary effect traceable to the atonement itself. Whereas, the first question which comes to the lips of an inquirer and to the logic of a theory is the question, Why was the death of the Son of God necessary to the salvation of the World? Each one of the great theological theories of the atonement derives its name and title from its treatment of this question.

THE RECTORAL OR GOVERNMENTAL THEORY

Affirms that the ground of necessity for the atonement of Christ must be found in the rectoral righteousness of God, and that the death of Christ was not penal. The atonement was a substitute for the penalty. It answers the question of necessity by discarding the retributive justice of the satisfaction theory and emphasizing rectoral—or public—justice. Holding that some adequate public manifestation of the righteousness of God was necessary, thus to maintain His law, declare His hostility to sin, and render it consistent and safe to pardon sinners.

It will not be necessary to recite the theory in detail further than is needed to show the relation

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of the “law and the cross.” So far as the question of necessity is concerned it makes no difference whether we affirm “the penalty” or “substitute for the penalty.” Either view represents the atonement of Christ as “a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction” for sin. The question of righteousness involved in the requirement of a propitiation is squarely met and fairly answered in both theories.

By affirming that the death of Christ was a substitute for the penalty—“that the literal suffering might be dispensed with”—the rectoral theory avoids many objections gravely urged against a penal theory. It avoids an objection to an imputed guilt and to an imputed obedience: To a system of exact equivalents; and to such a satisfaction of the penalty that it must be justly reckoned as paid, leaving no room for the proffer of salvation by grace. Further, it does not render such a satisfaction that there is ground for distinction between the elect and the non-elect. It is an universal or unlimited atonement; the justice rendered propitious is public justice and all men are made salvable. Thus harmonizing with those oft-repeated declarations of the New Testament, that the “free gift came upon all men to justification of life.”

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It is quite natural to infer that if Christ died in our stead He suffered the penalty which the law imposed on guilty man. But in the nature of things what Jesus could do to meet this requirement in our stead was limited by the character of the penalty itself. It was modified by conditions of fact. He could not suffer the penalty. The guilt, condemnation, and eternity of that death penalty could not in fact be His; because He was innocent, and in Him the Father was always "well pleased," and the endlessness of its irremediable term was impossible. (If His divinity is quoted to offset the eternity, what is that but a substitute?) He could bring an offering in lieu of the penalty, which would satisfy all the demands of holy law, and provide a legal—and more than a moral—equivalent for the penalty, and so far as His death could be analogous it was so; but other, or more than that, it could not be in the nature of things.

The sacrifices of four thousand years substituted the penalty until Christ came. He provided in His own death what they lacked to render them a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world; and all that rendered the penalty itself a just requirement of the law of God was as fully met and satisfied by the death of

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Christ, as a substitute for the penalty, as if the penalty itself had been executed, as originally announced, as subsequently deferred, and finally remitted to those who believe on Jesus. For, be it remembered, that THE penalty is not remitted to any living accountable creature except through “faith in His blood.” St. Paul expressly declares “to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful which are in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 1:1) that, “we all were by nature the children of wrath even as others” (2:3). He reminds these saints, in the same epistle, that they were “predestinated,” and “redeemed through His blood;” but the consummation of their redemption and the removal of wrath he attributes to faith, in chapter two, verse eight, “For by grace are ye saved through faith.”

We forget half the gospel message when we ignore the conditions. Everybody remembers the text, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ,” and that part of the context which reads, “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.” But who remembers the next verse? “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.” What a beautiful epitome of the whole

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gospel is John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” But who gives John 3:36 a place on the opposite wall of his memory? “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth in him.” In St. Paul’s great formula of redemption in Romans, in the third chapter, he crowds this great sentence right into the middle of it, “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood.” Then as he amplifies the doctrine of the atonement he weaves this faith condition into about every other paragraph to the end. Jesus died that the penalty might be remitted, and it is as much a part of the method of redemption that a free agent consent to the propitiation by receiving Christ as is the death of Christ itself. Whereas if the penalty had been suffered the whole world would in justice be exempt from it, and the law thus satisfied justice could not demand it again. In logical certainty the Calvinist is right, if His first premise of a penal atonement is admitted. For, if Christ died only for the elect and suffered the penalty, His salvation can not be put in jeopardy. And on the same terms the Univer-

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salist is right ; for he has only to modify one premise, viz., that Christ died for all men. Then were all free.

The Rectoral Theory carries no such weights, and is exposed to none of these insuperable objections. The only question which will occur to the common sense is this, namely, Is the answer of public justice as the ground of necessity a sufficient answer?

It approaches the atonement from the right standpoint, in that it makes the death of Christ a declaration of the righteousness of God. It harmonizes with the text, “to declare at this time the righteousness of God, that He might be just and the Justifier.” It rightly places the necessity for an atonement in the (rectoral) requirements of moral government. None of the objections that appear to embarrass a commercial view of the atonement can be urged against it. It is supported by Arminians generally, and by some moderate Calvinists. It chords with the main features of what was termed the Edwardian view of the atonement, and with what may be termed the modernized Calvinism of New England.

So far as it addresses the legal problem, the only stricture that seems applicable here, is that its aversion to the penal phase of justice seems to

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render it open to the charge that it fails sufficiently to emphasize the element of satisfaction (or propitiation). The answer given to governmental necessity is large and weighty, but in view of this lack it is charged that its discussion of the nature of the atonement lacks development.

The chief objection to the governmental theory is one which at first sight seems conclusive; at least to an advocate of a vicarious atonement. But the thing that gives weight to the objection is accidental, or at least incidental, and the more it is studied the less it will appear to weigh.

It is objected that the theory, by grounding the necessity for an atonement in the requirements of moral government, and representing the death of Christ as requisite to the ends of public justice, “reduces the death of Christ to a great moral spectacle. It becomes in fact another moral influence theory.”

The incidental relation between public justice, with the ends served by such a spectacle set forth, and the death of Jesus as a martyr to the truth whose example gives it value, is suggestive of such conclusion. But the only parallel is in the being set forth. There is absolutely no philosophical relation between them. The objection strictly applied will hold with reference to any vicarious

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atonement which is “set forth to be a propitiation.” Though we attach no significance to the words “set forth,” in the nature of the case an atonement must be exhibited to the world, and herein is the only identity. Though it must be admitted that public justice derives its sanction from the public, it must be credited to the theory also that back of any interest His creatures may have in it God presides to administer it; and to say as much is to affirm that the atonement is a declaration of the righteousness of God.

It is not another moral influence theory, in that it requires the death of Christ as the ground of salvation. Its treatment of sin requires expiation, and whether that expiation is adequate as a satisfaction is another question.

The only point of parallel, therefore, is the seeming and not the real.

The real objection to the rectoral theory lies deeper than the seeming; and it may be questioned whether, first, it does sufficiently emphasize the necessity which renders sin unpardonable without an atonement.

There is such latitude for development within the formula of a rectoral theory that this objection applies with more force to some presentations than to others; some advocates going so far as to

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deny that the demerit of sin demands punishment except wholly upon governmental grounds. We have given the early part of this treatise to that question, and here we only need to remind the reader that our previous conclusions were supported by the best of reasons; only evaded on the part of evangelical thinkers by a wrong inference as to the use made of the argument.

It may be questioned, second, whether in placing the whole weight of the theory upon public justice as the ground of necessity, it does sufficiently emphasize the element of satisfaction. It is objected that the element of satisfaction is limited to what is uttered by the object lesson of public justice, and it needs in some way to “bring in some form of the idea of satisfaction to divine justice.” To avoid the “commercial idea” of satisfaction as taught in the penal theory, it goes to the other extreme and ignores this idea to an extent that renders it wanting as a perfect New Testament formula. If this be true, it lacks what we have urged as necessary to the pardon of sin in a perfect government.

We have no sympathy for an objection which classes the rectoral theory with the moral influence theories; because of the measure of satisfaction rendered to public justice. But if rectoral or gov-

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ernmental is to be the title of our theory, and public justice rather than general justice is to be emphasized, then the theory in its treatment of satisfaction must be strongly guarded at this point. It is indeed the heart of the whole subject. A formula to express the whole truth must leave out nothing that will fairly include and fully define the ransom, propitiation, sin-offering, and reconciliation of the Holy Scriptures. Looking backward it must leave nothing wanting to match the demerit of sin, and looking forward it must measure up to the salvability of "the whole world."

It can not be denied that the fear of penal imputation has driven some of the ablest advocates of the rectoral theory to another extreme. One whose work is among the most able, and whose name is revered, giving one whole chapter to a denial of the pardonableness of sin in perfect moral government. Thus, after building a superstructure that seems impregnable to all logic, he proceeds to undermine the foundation and imperil the necessity for an atonement. Law has no remedy for the dead. Sin is death. Pardon is a remedy. It must be lawful. If any mortal thinker presumes that he has penetrated the depths of what sin means he has not studied the subject. We do not mean a sin, nor any sin, but SIN. No com-

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plicity, compromise or quarter (which pardon would imply) is seen in nature or revelation. By the apparition of fallen spirits, the exhibition of a lost world, the revelation of a great gulf fixed, and all the truth from which we mortals shrink, the pardonableness of sin under the reign of an infinitely Holy God is unthinkable.

“ The lightning’s flash did not create
The awful prospect it revealed,
But only showed the real state
Of what the darkness had concealed.”

Atonement must intervene between the idea of sin and the idea of pardon in perfect moral government, and that atonement must as fully declare the righteousness of God as the execution of the penalty would have done; and it is almost a dangerous thing to try to measure by words the depth of what it meant to Jesus Christ to die “that God might be just.”

Ecclesiasticism has lost its authority. The schools have none. The prestige of a great name soon wanes. Isms—Arminian and Calvin—no longer herd us in hostile camps. Denominational lines have no power to keep our books in or out. Nobody’s *ipse dixit* goes; and about the only autocrat of theology we know is the approval or the condemnation of our brethren.

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But there is an authority; an authority that presides over the “mysteries of God.” We are “stewards of these mysteries,” and “to the word and the testimony” is our final appeal. We venture that what our theology needs to-day more than anything else is a fearless acceptance of just what the Word of God teaches.

The good will and good sense of our brethren is great to keep us from any tendency to overdo or underdo our exegesis, but it will not furnish authority or provide material for stalwart life-giving thought. Sometimes this invisible monitor acts as a deterrent, and authors seem afraid to say sun up or sun down, lest it appear ancient or unscientific. And that may account in some measure for the fact that instead of building on foundations laid in the New Testament, and thus adding strength to the formula of an evangelical atonement, so many have built little block-houses of their own out of the chips that fell from the work of other men.

Some clear-headed, well-informed, and scholarly men hesitate in giving unqualified endorsement to either the satisfaction or the governmental theories. They have gripped the pillars of truth as they stand in the Holy Scriptures, and credited this to one theory and that to the other. We ven-

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ture the statement that if the essential justice of God, judicially interpreted, were made to apply to the latter theory with proper clearness and emphasis, the element of satisfaction would receive ample treatment, and commend the rectoral theory to the Godly judgment of such men. Some of our fathers covered a broad chasm by the words *general justice*, and it is indeed doubtful if in respect to the element of satisfaction any of the more recent advocates of this theory have improved on the clearness and amplitude of Richard Watson.¹

We venture the prophesy that a fearless grip on the New Testament words and terms, regardless of consequences, will give the Church of the future a theory of the atonement that will be a battlecry and a reduplica of the stalwart gospel of St. Paul.

¹ Substantially the Governmental Theory. "Not merely a wise and fit expedient of government, implying one of many possible expedients;" but a substitute for the penalty, with due emphasis upon the satisfaction rendered to justice. A declaration of the Righteousness of God, upholding the authority of the law, the righteous and holy character of the Lawgiver, and thus rendering pardon possible. See THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTES, Vol. II, Page 139.

CHAPTER XV.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST SUBSTITUTIONAL. SIN OFFERINGS. GREEK PARTICLES, WORDS, AND TERMS. HEATHEN AND JEWISH SACRIFICES. SACRIFICE AND SOCIAL FREEDOM. NEW TESTAMENT PREACHING.

We have refrained from burdening the reader with a study of the words and terms employed by the Scriptures in defining redemption, propitiation, ransom, atonement, etc. Sources of information are too many to require it, and Biblical cyclopedias are sufficiently full to give the general reader a very just notion of these and kindred words as employed in the original.

Jesus Christ is represented as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. As such His death was a propitiatory sacrifice. The New Testament use of the word *λυτρόν*, rendered ransom, and its derivatives, together with other terms indicative of atonement, imply that the death of Christ was SUBSTITUTIONAL; and in the same sense as were the sin-offerings of the Old Testament. That is, not as "a Gift to the Deity," nor as "a municipal fine," but as a substitute for the sinners presenting it, and in recognition

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of the fact that under the law the penalty for disobedience was death.

Any other view of the sacrifice seems unnatural and forced, and leaves the question of Jewish motive unanswered, while the facts as they stand recorded in the Old Testament render such conclusion natural and apparent.

Leviticus 17:2 can be understood in no other sense than that of substitution: “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.” That without such blood the penalty would be visited upon the guilty is the logical inference from such terms. That the life which was in the blood and poured out with the blood was substituted for the life of the sinner, only needs a recognition of the fact that death was the penalty for sin.

The law so declared. It was oft repeated, and universally so understood. Thus the syllogism is rendered perfect. We are aware that this conclusion has been disputed, and that various meanings attach to the different kinds of sacrifice. It is freely admitted that some scholarly men have disputed the idea of substitution. It takes the most erudite kind of scholarship even to attempt

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it, and nobody else would think of trying to convince a Jew that the blood of the Passover was not substitutional: something more than “a Gift to offended Deity,” “a municipal penalty,” or of the same character “as other sacrifices.” But the bulk of ancient testimony, including the Rabins and the Church Fathers, together with the fact that expiatory substitution by sacrifices was common with other ancient nations, adds such weight to the common and ordinary interpretation as to render it the most rational. Moreover, it is natural, simple, appropriate, apparent, and implied in the history of the case, both in the Old and in the New Testaments, that a sin-offering was substitutional.

GREEK PARTICLES.

Scholarly disputation has left no stone unturned, and every possible phase of the subject has been subjected to scrutiny and analysis. Even the Greek particles have been used to prove and to disprove the theory of substitution.

Against the doctrine of substitution it has been urged that those texts which affirm that Christ died for us are capable of a different construction; that in but two instances—Matt. 20:28 and Mark 10:45—where our Lord says, “The Son

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of man came to give His life a ransom for many,” does the word *for* accurately represent the thought of the Greek text.

The word most frequently employed by St. Paul is *ὑπέρ*—*huper*. “Christ died *for* the ungodly,” *huper*—Rom. 5:6. “Christ died *for us*,” *huper*—verse 8. “Delivered Him up *for us all*,” *huper*—Rom. 8:32. Now it is said that *huper* does not signify *for*, but “*in behalf of*;” thus implying an incidental benefit. It is not, therefore, to be understood in the sense of identity or substitution. The word used in Matthew and Mark is *αντι*—*anti*; and *anti* alone properly expresses the sense of *for*.

The argument contained in this statement has been variously employed. It is not new. It is noted and very conclusively answered by Richard Watson.¹

The difference between “*in behalf of*” and “*instead of*” is thus made the ground of an argument against all that is implied in a vicarious atonement.

In reply, first, we deny the accuracy of the thing premised. It is by no means true that *huper* is never used in the sense of *for*. Both as a prepo-

¹ *Institutes*, Part II, p. 107. Where he admits that *huper* and *anti* do not always signify substitution, but affirms that it is equally “certain that these prepositions do often signify substitution; and that the Greeks, by these forms of expression, were wont to express a vicarious death.”

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sition and in words composite it is frequently so used. Primarily, and with reference to place, it has the sense of over; corresponding to the Latin super.

Sometimes metaphorically, from the notion of standing over to protect; for, in defense of, in behalf of.

Again in the sense of for, instead of, in the name of, *ὑπέρ οὐτοῦ*—in his stead.

The meaning of both huper and anti in a majority of cases must be determined by the context. Sometimes either particle would equally express the sense of substitution—whether used singly or compounded. In the sentence, “Who gave Himself a ransom for all,” 1 Tim. 2:6, we have the word antilutron, a corresponding price: and huper, for all.

Anti may not always mean for, though it usually does. The original sense is, over against. Hence answering to instead, in the place of. Often to denote equivalence, frequently the same as the Latin pro. In the sense of for, in the place of, it is often employed in the classic Greek, in the Septuagint and in the Gospels.

Huper is used in the sense of identity—Acts 26:1—“Thou art permitted to speak for thyself.” In the sense of substitution in Rom. 16:4—

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“For My life laid down their own necks.” In John 11:50—“Expedient that one Man should die for the people, that the whole nation perish not.” And in Rom. 5:7, 8—“Scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die; but God commended His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.”

We urge it as a rule, that when a preposition capable of more than one meaning occurs in a sentence, it is safe to prefer the meaning that will best harmonize with the context. And again, a construction which contradicts the sense of the sentence is not admissible. For even an opponent must be allowed to be consistent with himself.

Take the sentence, “It is expedient that one Man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.” The preposition is huper. It bears either construction: in behalf of, or instead of. Instead of is preferable, because the context declare that the people would perish if the one Man does not. Death is the alternative. The same truth applies with the text in Rom. 5:7, 8, and others. Moreover, the overwhelming preponderance of facts, which otherwise determine the question of substitution, pro and con, should decide the meaning to be preferred when it can

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not be determined by a fair application of grammatical rules.

It should be borne in mind that in none of the texts cited, nor in any others which declare that Christ died for us, is there the slightest intimation that His death was other than in our room and stead. That St. Paul gave preference to the use of one particle rather than another has no other ground to stand on than the fact of preference; and if “the Greeks were thus wont to express a vicarious death,” there is good ground for that preference—in usage rather than in any shade of distinction between the particles employed. While every other fact, historical, logical, and declarative, affirms the death of Christ substitutional.

In view of the latitude involved in the use of the Greek particles, very little reliance can be placed on an exegesis founded on them or the difference between them. Sometimes a preposition stands in the middle of a sentence to balance the meaning of both sides. Sometimes it is a pivot, or a round table, on which a sentence, like a locomotive, is turned. Sometimes it serves to parallel two ideas, or to separate them. Sometimes, like anti, it stands in the middle and points a hand both ways; and sometimes it is like—luper. In

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some cases they are good to sharpen the wits of students; in others, good material with which to quibble; but never of sufficient utility for the foundation of a theological structure.

If it is thought that Paul's preference for *huper*—with the sense given, *i. e.*, “in our behalf”—seems to favor the Rectoral as against the Satisfaction theory, in that the sufferings of Christ were not penal; but “in our behalf” as a substitute for the penalty, we reply that the conclusion would be an unfair advantage. “In our behalf” favors no theory of substitution. It neither affirms nor denies. Its use requires the context to fix the sense in which Christ died in our behalf.

And indeed one of the very simple reasons for assuming that St. Paul meant to use *huper* in the sense of “for” is that in many texts the context plain avers substitution.

There are many texts in which neither anti nor *huper* is used that affirm substitution, such as, “Who His own self bears our sins in His own body on the tree,” 1 Peter 2:24. All those passages which represent the offering of Christ as a sin-offering, or His death as an expiation for our sins, with or without reference to Greek particles, affirm substitution.

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Therefore, reasoning from context to preposition, we infer that St. Paul meant to employ huper with about the same discrimination and emphasis as we do when we say that Christ died “for” us. If he did not, then with all his learned precision in the matter of prepositional preference, he has so far abandoned his method of accuracy in the contents of his Epistles as to lead the world to suppose that he meant substitution. Not merely the English world of Bible readers, but the world that thought and talked and wrote and sung in Greek. While it is reserved for the scholarship of modern times to discover his real purpose in one of the meanings of one of the Greek prepositions—huper.

Words are but arbitrary signs, made to express our thoughts and feelings; and it is not always possible to find the exact word and to fit it into a sentence or phrase so that it will fully express the one or the other with exact and perfect significance. Every object that presents itself to the consciousness calls for a corresponding word or phrase with which to give it expression. Sometimes the whole vocabulary accessible to the mind falls short, and lexicographers are constantly inventing these arbitrary signs to give exact expression to new ideas. In science and

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philosophy, and especially in those departments requiring analysis and minute distinctions, it is sometimes impossible to invent words that will express with perfect accuracy the true concept, with just enough and not too much emphasis upon every shade of its intended meaning.

Every possible definition of the word justice is not expressed in the many terms employed to give it significance. So of substitution, of satisfaction, and of many others. Least of all are the prepositions endowed with infallibility.

There are words and terms which in the course of time and use come to have meanings aside from their etymology. This appears in subsequent reference to them. Atonement is such a word. Sometimes a word takes on the significance of the thing which it metaphorically represents; and to understand its use and application, its history must be studied.

St. Paul did not use the word atonement. His word is *καταλληγη*, reconciliation. To atone, in the ancient Hebrew, was to cover; and its exact signification was not broad enough for his purpose. According to New Testament theology, the sacrifices of ancient Israel did not “make the comers thereunto perfect.” “It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins”—

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Heb. 10:1, 2. There was an atonement, and sins were covered; but it required the offering of Christ "once for all" to perfect the purging of sins. "For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified," verse 14.

The sacrifices of the Old Testament were like so many "notes of promise." A promissory note covers the debt for the time being, but it must be taken up at maturity and the obligation canceled. That cancellation is better expressed by "the reconciliation" than by "the atonement," etymologically understood.

But the word atonement in present use has come to have a wider meaning than that of a covering. It perfectly represents to Bible readers the finished redemptive work of Jesus, and there inheres in it a composite picture, a mental concept, which it perfectly expresses to many minds. We incline to think that *καταλληγη*, translated the atonement in the A. V., more nearly expresses to the average reader the thought of St. Paul than any other word in the English language. It is a word that persists.

In view of the evolution of languages, the changes wrought in time, and the difficulty of converting a dead language into the precise and animated terms of a living tongue, not to mention

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the factors of limited data and the differences of individual opinion, it is amazing that we have in our English Bible (of either version) a work of such compass and precision.

The work of a learned tent-maker, who twenty centuries ago contributed so largely to the bulk of the New Testament, and whose Alexandrian Greek was as finely chiseled as the products of Phidias, with as much life and beauty as the tessellated frescoes of a Greek temple, is to-day converted into “our mother tongue;” and we expect to find in it every shade and trace of thought that moved the soul of Paul, when with the fine hair-pencilings of an artist he traced the fervid lines of his Gospel to the Gentiles.

It is not strange that there is room for difference of opinion in determining the precise meaning of a word or a sentence, and is it not more in harmony with the dictates of common sense that questions involving the nature of a propitiatory sacrifice would better be determined by history and usage than by a precisional preference for one of the definitions of a Greek particle? If so, the theory of a vicarious atonement is vindicated, and it only remains to show in what sense the sufferings of our Lord were substitutional.

In our search for the diminutive we sometimes

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overlook the vast. This is a tendency with specialists. The findings of scholarship settle things; but the area which it covers must not be limited to a part. It is even possible to put into a formula all the elements it should contain and yet to lose the life which should animate the whole body. The history of a doctrine is sometimes as essential to its proof as the very words it contains. Background is as essential to a picture as some of the scenes which compose its parts.

When the apostles began to preach the gospel of Christ, with the emphasis on “Him crucified,” it was unnecessary to argue the need of an atonement. The world was fully prepared to receive the Christian doctrine of expiatory sacrifice. Without the shedding of blood no remission, was the doctrine of Jew and Gentile. Sacrifice was not only familiar to the Jewish and pagan world, but the only conceivable method of approach to God or to the gods. They knew no other; and while the Jew in his dispersion, or the Gentile in his skepticism, clung to a vestige of religious sentiment the doctrine of expiation was imperious. The demerit of sin, the justice of penalty, and the necessity for atonement was universally held; and it only needed the proof that Jesus Christ was the God-appointed Victim of sacrifice to complete

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the gospel ground of reconciliation. And to this task the apostles gave themselves with all the unction of a supernatural anointing.

This, among other historic facts, was part of the preparation for the coming of Christ, and it furnished a basis of faith for the heathen as well as the Jewish world.

To argue that since all the old Jewish types and symbols are swept away their significance is of no value in determining the true character of Christianity, is to defy both history and Providence, and to make the apostles a party to the ignorance, rather than the truth, of heathenism. In fact, the very words and terms of Jewish ritual were adopted and adapted, greatly to the furtherance of the gospel. And an ethical theory of the atonement which ignores the heinousness of sin (rather the fact of sin), and the relevancy of Jewish sacrifices to illustrate the atonement, is moored to nothing in either the history of mankind or the words and terms of apostolic use and sanction.

Critics of to-day laboriously challenge, by digging at the foundations, what the apostles and primitive Christians built upon without question. If they were wrong, it was fortunate for Christianity. Then the apostles are found false wit-

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nesses of God for the furtherance of the gospel—a thing Paul repudiated as a slander, in that somewhat curious passage in Rom. 3:7, 8, “For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto His glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil that good may come? Whose damnation is just.” (He says in a preceding verse, “I speak as a man,” and he evidently does.)

The fact that the heathen world so believed is no proof of the divine sanction; but if the apostles were inspired men and built upon it, the divine sanction is implied.

“By their fruits ye shall know them” is not a mere maxim. There inheres in it a principle wherein righteousness and success are related as cause and effect. The vast harvest of Christianity, wherein is included the bulk of all that has blessed the world since Christ ascended, must be traced to its root in the gospel of the cross.

Moreover, sacrifice, as we know it, involving self-denial for the good of others, is one of the grand elements of social betterment. The path of liberty is stained with the blood of those who suffered vicariously; and is it any wonder that its very life and essence is personified in Christ

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and exhibited in His cross? Nor is it merely a question of doctrinal interest which may be outgrown and outlived. It faces the moral reforms of every age and at the most vital point. Just now men are everywhere agitating the question of Social Freedom. What is the price of social freedom? Answer, Sacrifice.

The highest aim of social freedom is brotherhood, and it can neither be secured nor maintained without sacrifice. The principle of sacrifice is divine. “Bear ye one another’s burdens” divides the load. The “Golden Rule” is mightier than gunboats to keep the peace of nations. Racial brotherhood is the political millennium. Sacrifice rooted in regeneration is the God-appointed means. Pray that it may come!

Jesus Christ chose the lone and periled path of pain and death because it was the only one that led to the rescue and redemption of a perishing world. Substituting, Satisfying, Sacrificing. The Christian doctrine is that sin can not go unpunished in the divine administration. It is reinforced by the awful consequences of sin, everywhere apparent, from Eden down. The penalty must be inflicted, or the authority of law must be established by means of the death of Christ in our stead. (An interpretation of the exact nature of

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that substitution is of small moment compared with the fact.) Words, terms, types, symbols, doctrinal truths, and parallelisms in one long procession reinforce the statement that Christ died in our stead. And an interpretation of the atonement which does not comport with its use in evangelical preaching, and present the Lamb of God as a victim of sacrifice, enduring the cross and despising the shame as our substitute, and in full satisfaction of the demands of infinite justice, comes short of New Testament preaching and common sense interpretation.

He died in our stead—what love! To vindicate the righteousness of God in the pardon of our sins—what justice! That whosoever believeth on Him might not perish, but have eternal life—what grace!

NOTE.—The only serious objection to the doctrine of substitution grows out of the supposition that the sufferings of Christ were penal, and the substitution absolute; as per the Satisfaction Theory.

The Govermental Theory obviates that objection. Affirming that the substitution was provisional and the atonement rectoral. Another chapter will discuss this difference.

CHAPTER XVI.

NOT "OUR THEORY." THE SATISFACTION RENDERED? I. NEGATIVELY. II. AFFIRMATIVELY. THE REAL MYSTERY. THE PROPITIATION ANALOGOUS TO THE PENALTY. THE BLOOD OF CHRIST THE PERPETUAL BINDING MEANS OF RECONCILIATION.

PERHAPS the reader is ready to ask for a complete constructive statement of the author's theory of the atonement. Such demand is reasonable enough, but it implies too much: namely, that there is room for a new theory, and that we presume to clothe it in terms of originality as our theory.

Not so; but on the contrary, we agree with Dr. Miley in the statement that there is room for but two theories of a vicarious atonement.¹ Not that these two appropriate all the facts; but two with respect to something—that something having special reference to the substitution; whether absolute, as in the Satisfaction theory, or provisional, as in the Governmental theory. (Or put in an-

¹ Atonement In Christ, p. 106.

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other form, two with respect to the satisfaction rendered to justice; whether penal or rectoral.)

That can not be an atonement which has no respect to the question of satisfaction rendered; nor to the righteousness of God which stands as a bar to pardon. Therefore, the announcement of a new theory, in strict alignment with the facts, means something other than a vicarious or a New Testament atonement. Hence a constructive statement which incorporates either theory, with a right interpretation of the questions involved in substitution and satisfaction, is all that can be reasonably required.

The utility of a theory is determined by its answer to the question of satisfaction. Or in other words, in pointing out the connection between the death of Christ and the justice that was concerned to render pardon possible.

The question is sometimes put in these words, "What is the vinculum between the death of Christ and the pardon of sin?" In any form in which the question may be put we face a problem, and many thoughtful students of soteriology are slow to believe that with all the data we possess it can be fairly solved. It may be that here the river runs into the sea, and if so our terminology will not reach the depths; but it will aid our

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appreciation of the magnitude of the atonement, and we make the attempt.

If the nature of the atonement is determined by the nature of its necessity, what is the objective ground of that necessity? If it is justice, as affirmed by both theories under discussion, was it penal or retributive justice; or was it rectoral or public justice? If the Satisfaction theory is preferred, the answer is easy and direct. If Christ suffered the penalty in our stead, the substitution was absolute and the satisfaction the same in kind. Then the words and terms ransom, redeemed, bought with a price, on Him was laid the iniquity of us all, etc., are to be taken literally and need no comment. But against this view of satisfaction it is objected that if the sufferings of Christ were penal then the debt is fully paid and the atonement must issue in the salvation of all for whom Christ died. It only requires an unlimited atonement to prove an universal salvation. Moreover, if the penalty has been suffered, it would be unjust to require it again; while the bestowal of its benefit in the pardon of sin would be an act of sheer justice and not "by the grace of God."

On the other hand, if retributive justice was not concerned in the sacrifice and the objective

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ground of the atonement was wholly rectoral, there is ground to suppose that some expedient other than the death of Christ might have satisfied the ends of public justice as an administrative display; and we have another Moral Influence theory, which is not an atonement in any New Testament sense. Not that the advocates of a rectoral theory admit this conclusion. They disclaim the idea, and affirm that it was a declaration of the righteousness of God. This can well be done, provided the element of satisfaction is not ignored; and provided rectoral justice is so defined that the ends of retributive justice, so far as necessary to declare the righteousness of God and maintain the interests of moral government, were met and satisfied by the propitiation.

In order to clear the subject of all extraneous matter, and if possible render the discussion comprehensive to the general reader who is not versed in the theories of the atonement, we will attempt an answer to the question that follows; namely, **What justice was concerned in the necessity for an atonement, and WHAT JUSTICE WAS SATISFIED IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST?**

We think that the answer embodies most that is vital to a right interpretation of the atonement. And in making the attempt we are not unmind-

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ful of the fact that it involves some of the most serious difficulties, and that very wise and able men have differed in their conclusions. In the hands of men whom the Church reveres as among its greatest thinkers the objections we have noted are made to disappear: but whether with true scientific accuracy is a matter of opinion, and the espousal of either theory a matter of preference.

It is ours at most to view the subject from the standpoint of evangelical utility, and to insist that a true theory of the atonement must in its presentation of the justice satisfied, measure up to the plane of apostolic preaching and to the principles involved in the faith of an actual Christian experience. And in this connection it is well to remark the fact that one reason, though not the chief reason, why it is difficult to measure up to this demand in the discussion of theories is because such treatment is seldom addressed to the efficacy of the atonement; and properly so. Whereas the New Testament writers usually treat the death of Christ from the standpoint of its efficacy as the ground of salvation. But the point at which the efficacy and utility of the atonement touches this requirement is just here and has to do with the question of satisfaction, which must be treated in attempting the answer.

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SATISFACTION. (I. NEGATIVELY.)

The word so often used in theological phrase, and in the formula, “A perfect sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world,” is a good word. It may embarrass some theorists, but it helps to keep us close to the idea of propitiation. If we adhere to the sense given it in the Roman law, it must refer to the “contentment of an injured person.” And in that sense, satisfaction would have reference to the mind of God as favorably affected. Properly understood, that sense is admissible; but not so as to imply an implacable disposition needing appeasement or propitiation. It is almost too juvenal to refer to an implacable God, who “so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.” An ordinary heathen, conscious of sin and under a sense of its ill desert, and with an apprehension of punishment, might readily infer that the divine displeasure could be averted by a placating atonement.

There would be no occasion for any discrimination in the nature of his offering, whether of the field, the forest, or the flock. The only measure of adaptation would be its value to him; and since life itself was more precious than any-

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thing else, he might literally give “the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul.” The purpose of such devotion would be to placate the anger of his god and thus escape the penalty which his sins in justice deserve. Why is not this view of satisfaction to divine justice the true view, and hence the Christian doctrine of atonement?

Every intelligent Christian repudiates it; and those who oppose the doctrine of a vicarious atonement on the ground that it is “heathen and barbarous” persist in doing so, either in ignorance of the fact or from sheer contumacy. There is nothing in the divine disposition needing an atonement other than such as is grounded in His rectoral obligations. In general, it may be said that whatever of judicial rectitude on the part of God which required Him to inflict penalty upon transgressors and thus declare His righteousness, was involved in the satisfaction rendered. Nothing in His fatherly disposition needed pacification, placation, or satisfaction which was not involved in essential and rectoral justice.

It is only such satisfaction to the mind of God as renders it safe and expedient, and consistent with His righteous character as a just Governor, to exert the prerogative of pardon.

It is not uncommon in legal practice for a judge

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to express his profound sorrow in the act of pronouncing sentence against a culprit; and if in a case of great provocation he should express his gratification, he transcends the spirit of the law which knows no resentment. The law takes no account whatever of praise or blame, and is utterly devoid of passion.²

The effect upon the mind of God in case sin was punished as it deserves would be anything but pleasing. Yet it would be such a declaration of the righteousness of God as would meet the demands of holy law, maintain the honor of His administration, uphold His authority, and satisfy His obligation to punish sin. Nor can the death of His only begotten Son be viewed as a satisfaction to Him in any other than this legal and rectoral sense; which, in view of the justice involved in the penalty announced and the ends sought by a declaration of the righteousness of God, fully satisfied the Law-giver.

COMMERCIAL OR DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE NOT CONCERNED.

The satisfaction rendered was not a *quid pro quo*. It was not a satisfaction in the sense of a

² Note the description of a perfect Judge or Chancellor, as given by Judge Walker, and quoted in the early part of this work, p. 38.

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commercial equivalent. The words redeem, ransom, propitiation, and bought do indeed imply a consideration; but they do not define that consideration. That Christ fulfilled the law for us, both in obedience to its precept and in the suffering of its penalty, is an inference not warranted by the New Testament; though it is so nearly the truth as to become a fruitful error.

If Christ paid our debt in the sense of rendering satisfaction, both in kind and degree, then our justification would be a matter of right, *de jure*, by law and not by grace; whereas we are not justified by the atonement, but by grace; the atonement having rendered it just on the part of God to bestow that grace, on the sole condition of faith in Christ, “who was delivered up for our trespasses and was raised for our justification” (Rom. 4: 25).

The atonement is necessarily provisional. No atonement can be made that would render the substitution of Christ absolute. Retributive justice was not so satisfied that it would be unjust to punish sin. Such an absolute substitution accepted as a satisfaction in the sense that all sin is punished in Christ would ignore moral accountability, cancel free agency, and thus transcend the purpose of moral government.

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It is true that all men are made salvable; but neither the divine attitude toward the heinousness of sin, nor the status of sinners with respect to their moral obligation, is changed by the propitiation. The law is not abrogated. Its penalty is not paid.

It is this commercial view of the atonement which invites most of the criticism against it; and it can not be denied that when burdened by such an interpretation, a vicarious atonement has a mercenary aspect. It is true that the death of Christ was a consideration which God accepted as securing the interests of moral government, as we shall see later, but the atonement did not render sin any less obnoxious to God nor sinners any less worthy of the penalty.

The atonement was not only a declaration of the righteousness of God, but a declaration of His purpose to punish sin. It did not appease the wrath of God. And though it be a difficult and delicate task to define the judicial sense of that term, it must neither be denied nor ignored. Some thinkers, in order to defend the divine character against the charge of personal resentment, reduce the wrath of God to an impersonal placidity. They begin right by grounding it in His holiness, but conclude with something more like

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the divine complaisance. They are not able (none of us are) to comprehend the extremes of divine wrath and divine love, which met in the vindication which the death of Christ was designed to effect. “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord,” does not mean that God is vindictive and will punish sin to gratify His personal resentment. Vindication is allowable and just, and better expresses the primary meaning of the Greek, *ekdikesis*, than the word vengeance.³

It requires a breadth of thought like that which contemplates the endlessness of space to see in the attitude of the Supreme Being a judicial wrath and a filial beneficence as both are exhibited on the cross.

SATISFACTION. (II. AFFIRMATIVELY.)

What justice was concerned in the necessity for an atonement, and what justice was satisfied in the death of Christ?

Having prefaced the subject negatively, we are now prepared to discuss the question of satisfaction affirmatively. It is plain that the justice that was concerned in the necessity for an atonement is the justice satisfied, and for this reason we

³See this distinction clearly treated in “The Religion of To-morrow.” By Frank Crane, page 319.

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have put the question in the double form recited.

It is plain that the nature of the atonement is fixed by the nature of its necessity. The same justice which rendered it impossible to extend mercy to the guilty, by the pardon of sin and the bestowal of grace, was the justice to be satisfied by a propitiation. The satisfaction demanded was one that would render it possible for God to be propitious.

Now, the justice concerned was, first, that which belongs to the rectitude of the divine character: expressed by the term, “the righteousness of God.” And second, rectoral—or public—justice: that which concerns moral government and the interests of all His creatures.

The salutary benefits of the atonement no doubt, as foreseen by Him, did most powerfully affect the divine mind in providing it. “He shall see of the travail of his soul” (Isa. 53:11). But these benefits stood not in the way as a bar to pardon, and can not enter the problem in the question of satisfaction rendered.

Until God could extend a provisional pardon (that is a pardon conditioned on faith in Christ), it was necessary that an atonement be provided that would justify the divine character and uphold the authority of law while securing to man

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the gracious benefits of the divine favor. In the death of Christ THESE ENDS WERE SECURED, and so far as it affected the mind of the Law-giver He was satisfied, and so far as it affected the principles of righteousness that stood in bar to the exercise of pardon they were satisfied.

We have in these conclusions ample vindication of a vicarious atonement, and if we could go no further there might be general agreement among evangelical thinkers.⁴ But beyond this, in defining the justice concerned in the propitiation of Christ, the thinkers of the Church divide. Therefore, with the greatest deference to the opinions that differ, we attempt a further answer to the question; viz., "What justice was satisfied in the death of Christ?"

Beginning as before, with the statement that the same justice which rendered pardon impossible was the justice concerned in the propitiation, we affirm that it was rectoral or administrative justice. (The words rectoral, administrative, governmental, and public justice all implying the same thing.) We can not interpret the atonement as a ransom in any such sense that the death

⁴ Originally it was not our intention to pursue the subject further: but we yield to the demand for "something constructive," and endeavor to "atone" for our strictures regarding theories, by carrying the question of satisfaction to a definition of the kind of justice suffered and satisfied.

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of Christ consummated the salvation of sinners by rendering to retributive justice all that was due, and we think that a right definition of the word rectoral is sufficiently comprehensive to include the ends of essential justice involved in the sacrifice.

If we are to use words in a technical and theological sense, we must be careful to define them with precision; and if rectoral justice is thus correctly defined, there is no question but it is sufficiently declarative of the righteousness of God and of the satisfaction rendered.

The objection to its use as a final answer is that it savors altogether of administrative expediency; and it follows that if the atonement was solely a governmental expedient, it may be one of several that might have been adopted. God might as well have declared His righteousness as He did the Ten Commandments, in an imposing and spectacular manner. All of which is abhorrent to the spirit and letter of the New Testament.

Hence we insist that rectoral justice must be understood to include essential justice. We must avoid the thought that rectoral justice has no value but as a display. Back of its utility as a deterrent and incentive there must be a ground

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of righteousness: else it would not be a declaration of the righteousness of God. It would not be rectoral justice.

It is, therefore, impossible to separate the quality of essential justice from the atonement as a governmental measure, and we are justified in affirming that the justice which rendered pardon impossible was the justice satisfied in the propitiation; namely, rectoral justice. The rectoral ends of essential justice were met by the death of Christ as well as they would have been met by the infliction of the penalty.

If the Supreme Lawgiver is disposed to forgive sin and can not forgive sin consistently with His rectoral obligations, and must needs punish it to declare His righteousness and maintain the interests of moral government without peril, then an atonement which would *MEET THESE ENDS*, though it be not the penalty, but a substitute for the penalty, may be a just ground of pardon.

Now, it is our claim that in the nature of the case Jesus could not suffer the penalty; that insuperable objections to a penal atonement render it impossible; that the sufferings of Jesus were not the same in kind and degree; but that His death as a substitute for the penalty *met the same ends so far as they were concerned to de-*

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clare the righteousness of God, maintain the interests of moral government, and render pardon possible.

Such a Governmental Theory is rational and tenable, and we believe it measures up to the plane of an evangelical New Testament gospel, and answers to the requirements of “a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.”

Among the advocates of such a governmental view of the atonement, as opposed to the idea that the death of Christ was a mere administrative expedient, we class Richard Watson. He says: “We call the death of Christ a satisfaction rendered to divine justice, with reference to its effect upon the mind of the Supreme Lawgiver. As a just Governor He is satisfied, contented with the atonement offered by the vicarious death of His Son.” “Nor is this to be regarded as a merely wise and fit expedient, a point to which even Grotius leans too much, as well as many other divines.”⁵

We are pleased to note that our position is further confirmed by Dr. Miner Raymond, who says, “The death of Christ is exponential of divine justice, and is a satisfaction in that sense, and

⁵ Institutes. Vol. II. pp. 138-9.

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not in the sense that it is, as of a debt, the full and complete payment of all demands.” And again: “The death of Christ is declarative. It declares the righteousness of God; is a declaration that God is a righteous Being and a righteous Sovereign; it satisfies the justice of God, both essential and rectoral, in that it satisfactorily proclaims them and vindicates them by securing their ends—the glory of God and the welfare of His creatures.”⁶

It does not lower or minify the death of Christ to say that it was not the penalty, but a substitute for the penalty. To say, as Dr. Raymond does, that the sufferings of Christ “were equivalent in the ends secured, but not equivalent in the sense that they are of the same nature,” harmonizes with the facts and is perfectly consistent with all the terms involved.⁷

Dr. John Miley, whose great work on the atonement is a classic, disclaims the view that the death of Christ was merely an administrative display, but affirms that it was a declaration of the righteousness of God.

He further says: “As in the Satisfaction Theory, so in the Rectoral, the sufferings of Christ

⁶ Systematic Theology, p. 258.

⁷ Idem, p. 272.

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are an atonement for sin only as in some sense they take the place of penalty. But they do not replace penalty in the same sense in the schemes. In the one they take its place as a penal substitute, thus realizing the office of justice in the actual punishment of sin; in the other they take its place in the fulfillment of its office as concerned with the interests of moral government. It is the office of justice to maintain these interests through the means of penalty. Therefore, atonement in the mediation of Christ must so take the place of penalty as to fulfill the same office.⁸ Not the penalty, but "the fulfillment of its office as concerned with the interests of moral government," is equivalent to saying that the atonement satisfies the ends of justice involved in the sacrifice, as well as the penalty itself would have done: so far at least as the purpose of the penalty was governmental.⁹

⁸ Atonement in Christ, Page 217.

⁹ Dr. Miley seems to make ample provision for the element of justice in his definition of rectoral justice, but he was so careful to shun the terminology of the satisfaction theory that he has given it no prominence. We think he drove dangerously near the edge when he said, there is no absolute necessity for punishment on the ground of the divine veracity (p. 158), and that one wheel went over the bank in the statement that the demerit of sin alone imposes no punitive obligation upon God, p. 164. We think it does, and that there was no implied conditionality in the announcement of the penalty, "Thou shalt surely die."

But whether this be the case or not, it is certain that the demerit of sin renders punishment just (this he affirms also), and if just, it seems to us, that any other treatment of it can not be optional. Moreover it is part of the office of punitive or retributive justice to uphold public justice; and if the ill desert of sin puts no obligation on the lawgiver to punish it we have no ground of essential righteousness in rectoral justice.

The ends of retributive justice are twofold, having reference both to the governor and to the guilty. If the first is provided for, the second may be remitted. But, let it be noted, the obligation obtains until the atonement renders it optional with God to remit the penalty.

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It serves every purpose to say that the justice that stood in bar to the pardon of sin, and the justice met and satisfied by the death of Jesus was rectoral. That while He did not suffer the penalty, His death took the place of penalty, met the ends of justice—essential and rectoral—so far as necessary to declare the righteousness of God and render pardon possible.

If the objector insists that retributive justice must be satisfied, we reply: It is part of the office of retributive justice to vindicate the law and conserve the interests of moral government. This end was met in the atonement, and to insist that retributive justice must be met absolutely is to insist on the penalty. If the penalty is suffered, justice is satisfied absolutely and nothing is left for pardon. The purpose of the atonement was not absolute, but provisional; and all that was needed to render pardon possible was to vindicate the law and conserve the interests of moral government. Do we then make void the law? Nay, God forbid! Yea, we establish the law.

Therefore we insist that the propitiation was not the penalty, but a substitute for the penalty, which met all the ends of justice concerned in the transaction; not to effect an absolute pardon, but

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“to declare His righteousness, that God might be just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

It is a common saying that there is some truth in all theories. But if there is any truth in that saying, it can not apply to the question of satisfaction rendered to justice. For as we have seen, there can be but two theories with reference to the satisfaction rendered or the justice propitiated. Either it was retributive and absolute justice, as represented in the theory of penal satisfaction, or it was rectoral justice, as defined by the advocates of a provisional atonement in the Governmental Theory.

THE REAL MYSTERY.

There are questions involved in the problem of atonement which we can answer only in part—for we know in part. Among them and growing out of this discussion is the question which every studious mind will ask; namely, How does the death of Christ meet and satisfy the ends of justice?

Hitherto we have dealt with the legal principles involved; with facts and phases familiar to us; but here we come face to face with greater problems, and our knowledge is limited to what is revealed.

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The “how” of the atonement can not be fully comprehended. “Angels desire to look into it.” It involves too much to be comprehended in the formula of a theory. Much of the confusion and most of the nonsense that characterizes many so-called modern theories begins at this very point, and it is not strange that they go wrong before they go far. How the death of Christ meets the ends of justice is not explained in the New Testament, and yet the New Testament is our only authority on the subject. It declares the fact in many ways, but the mode is left hidden behind the mighty mysteries of the gospel of Christ.

The question relates primarily to the fact of the atonement, and its solution must take into account the incarnation, the person of Christ; His relation to the Father as the only begotten Son, and to the race of man as its head and representative; His original and undervived qualifications as the Eternal Logos; His voluntary humiliation and substitution of Himself for us as the Son of God and the Son of man. All this, together with His investitures of office as the anointed Redeemer, Prophet, Priest, and King, made His atonement what it was; while His offering of Himself “without spot to God, through the Eternal Spirit,” consummated the sacrifice and (satisfied)

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confirmed the justice of Almighty God. The incarnation and a multiple of mysteries behind the veil of His flesh are only revealed in majestic outline. The atonement is all the more sublime because here it reaches into the inscrutable. Should the greatest transaction of all time, involving a reconciliation of the justice of God with His mercy, have no unsounded depths for us? The divinity of Jesus Christ, as well as His humanity, rendered Him eligible as the Lamb of God. That He was divine brings into the sacrifice an element of infinite merit, and while we can not explain the mode of its application to the problem of justice, we know that the sacrificial death of such a Being is enough. To one who believes in the divinity of Christ—especially if he has “tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come,” the problem is solved. Indeed, the fact that the death of Christ met and satisfied all the ends of justice involved in rendering a lost world salvable is written on every page of the New Testament.

ANALOGOUS TO THE PENALTY.

The awfulness of such a mystery as the death of the Son of God can only be compared to the awfulness of the wrath of God in the execution

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of the penalty itself. And that this should be so is more than a mere coincidence. There is a perfect analogy between the penalty and the substitute for the penalty. If not designed, it is at least laid in the very nature of things, and absolutely necessary to meet the ends of justice as well as the penalty would have done.

In some physical respects there is identity, but in others analogy. The penalty was death. The substitute was death. The likeness is so exact that even the Scriptures speak of the substitute in terms that apply to the penalty. Nor is this a concession to a penal theory. It could not be otherwise (unless there was no analogy) and take the place of penalty.

In a penal theory there is absolute identity, and hence no room to speak of an analogy between the death of Christ and the penalty. But in the Governmental scheme there is not only room for it, but occasion to emphasize it. Advocates may evade it to escape the appearance of identity; but to our thought it is needed to give the theory New Testament standing and completeness: for if the death of Christ was not a suffered penalty, it was so like it as to meet all the ends of penalty that were concerned to vindicate the law and conserve the interests of moral gov-

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ernment; and Christ Jesus set forth to be a propitiation declares the righteousness of God as well as the penalty would have done. This is the Rectoral or Governmental theory in a paragraph. The analogy left out or ignored leaves the Governmental theory with nothing to stand on but an administrative display, and that without a foundation in justice. A substitute for the penalty which does not reach to the bitterness of a dreadfully analogous death is indeed a substitute, but it is a substitute for the atonement.

It matters not, if the ends of justice are met, whether it be the penalty or a substitute for the penalty; but the purpose of the penalty, so far as the penalty was designed to vindicate the law and declare the righteousness of God, must be met by death. We aver that THE DEATH of Christ was analogous to THAT DEATH.

We would be careful here. God forbid we should minify the death of Christ by trying to measure it! This is holy ground. To meet the ends of justice which the penalty was designed to effect it was not enough that the Son of God should suffer: He must die. It was not enough that He should humble Himself to the estate of man. It was not enough like the penalty to become a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

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There were reasons for that, too. “It became Him in bringing many sons into glory to make the Captain of their salvation perfect,” perfect as a Captain, “through sufferings.” It was not enough that He taste the bitter experiences of poverty, rejection, and shame. That was analogous to some of the results entailed by sin and hence to the penalty: but it was not enough. He must taste DEATH for every man. *His death is the atonement.*

Death is not a cessation of being or the extinction of life merely. It involves a change of state, and is a profound mystery. Whether in the separation of soul and body, or what the New Testament terms “second death,” it is an awful “hurt,” and the fear of death is universal and seems to be innate in every living creature. It is associated with sin as the sting of death, and with the devil as “having the power of death,” and is represented as both a consequence of sin and a curse. Poetic license may make it a friend, but it is “the last enemy” to be destroyed. The fear of it is an instinct of preservation. It is natural to dread it, and supernatural to conquer it.

True, the Christian has nothing to fear. Christ has taken the sting out of it. (Heb. 2:14 and Jno. 9:51.) Nor shall we ever know the death

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He has tasted. We can only veil our faces and leave Him as the angels did—to die alone. His awful isolation, the withdrawal of His Father's face, evoked that bitter cry, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Only the simple language of the Gospels can frame the scene of such a death and enshrine the pathos of its never-ending appeal to the mercy of God and to the hearts of men. His death—sad, strange, analogous to the penalty, and unutterably appalling—was enough. Viewed from the throne of infinite holiness or from the standpoint of any world in the universe of God, it was enough! And if ever the finite and the Infinite are reconciled, they must come together facing that stupendous fact.

It does not belong to our little reasonings to fathom the atonement. As far as we can think and our common sense is capable of weighing evidence, the atonement of the New Testament is a rational method of reconciliation. But deeper, wider, higher, and forever the merit of Jesus' blood is boundless. The cross stands midway between man and God, between the finite and the Infinite, between the Logos and His creation, and is the means of reconciliation. It will never become old or obsolete. The one great dependent fact, the one immortal truth that Jesus' blood

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was shed for us renders us ELIGIBLE to receive the grace of God; while God Himself can do nothing for us except through our Lord Jesus Christ and with respect to His shed blood as the perpetual binding vindication of the deed.

NOTE. We limit our discussion of Theories to those treated at length, for the reason that the Satisfaction and Governmental theories are sufficiently comprehensive to cover every relevant question that concerns the real problem.

Moral Influence theories, which conceive the work of Christ as terminating on man, in bringing to bear on him inducements to the Christ life: Mystical theories, which conceive Christ's work as terminating physically on man: Theories which shift the merit of atonement to the incarnation of Christ; and others equally irrelevant, do not concern an evangelical interpretation of the New Testament.

In our view there can be but two theories of the atonement, which can claim the merit of a vicarious atonement, in strict scientific relation to the doctrines of the New Testament, evangelically interpreted.

CHAPTER XVII.

AXIOMATIC POSTULATES OF REASON. AN "I AM."
MAN'S PLACE IN THE DIVINE PURPOSE. RECON-
STRUCTION OR DESTRUCTION. GRANDEUR AND
ETERNITY OF THE CHRISTIAN CALLING.

God is seen in His works as in His Word. If anywhere in the universe we can find thought, we have proof of a thinker. If design, then a designer. If we find a thing or being possessed of personal consciousness, that is something or somebody that exists and knows it, we may be sure that the creator of that thing or being possesses personal consciousness.

It is one thing to exist, and another thing to exist and know it. Somewhere, sometime, and somehow, we do not know where, or when or how, each of us came to possess personal consciousness. Each one of the race of man is an I am. If therefore God is our Creator, He must posses personal consciousness, and be an I AM. Else the personal being, each personal being, is greater than God.

Whether we are the product of a distinct creation, or the consummation of a long series of

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forces, and therefore the product of evolution, makes no difference. The method of our creation is not in point. The fact that we possess personal consciousness, whether its bestowal came to us directly, or by the longer route of many steps, is proof that it came from a source no less capable and no less endowed. It is an old thought, nobody knows how old, that an effect can not contain more than its cause. It may be denied, but it has not been answered.

Incidentally, it is strongly presumptive of the truth, that in giving account of the “burning bush,” Moses should represent God as the “I AM,” who sent him to deliver the children of Israel. He could not be less than “I AM” and be God. If God is a personal being He must be either good or bad. We know He is great, and we can not conceive a being possessing entity, as such, who is not likewise a moral being; a being possessed of moral character, either good or bad. It is everything to us to believe that God is good. It may be that we could not know this with certainty without revelation. The heathen do not know it; and the best of them deified the bad as well as the good. But, whether from His Word or His works and our intuitional sense of the nature of things, or from all combined, we believe

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that God is good. No one who believes that God is a personal being and the Creator of the heavens and the earth but believes that He is a holy God. “Holy, just, and good” is the testimony of His Word, and few will question that conclusion.

If then all this be true of God, He is a Thinker and a Holy Being. If He is the Creator He must have had a plan of creation, and a purpose in all the work He wrought. We have seen that He has both a physical government and a moral government. Judging from the relative importance of things, His moral government is the main thing. The moral and spiritual is supreme, while the material and the natural exists subordinately for higher ends. Man is a microcosm. Both the physical and the spiritual exist in him. He is not only a being of personal consciousness, but distinctively a moral being, and as such a subject of God’s moral government. All this being true, it is rational to suppose that in the beginning—the same beginning as of record in Genesis 1:1—we had a place in the divine plan of creation. The Old Testament affirms the character of God and His creation, while the New Testament in several striking passages affirms the “eternal purpose” with reference to man. Whatever may be thought of the divine foreknowledge, or said of “the decrees

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of the Almighty," it is worthy of all theology to affirm that God is a Holy God, and that man was created for some high and holy purpose.

That God is a Designer, and that He had a plan and a purpose in creation, and that man had a place in that plan, and was made for some high and holy calling, which would include not only the perfection of his being, and hence his own felicity, but the good of others and the glory of his Maker, as the ultimate end of his destiny, is a rational supposition.

The old Catechism rings true in reply to the question, "What is the chief end of man?" Answer, "To glorify God and enjoy Him forever." If by their beauty and majesty the heavens declare the glory of God, is it not likewise truth that everything God has made does in some way, within the sphere of its being and under the law of its constitution, serve the end of its being by glorifying God? And if so, by as much as man is more than either material, vegetable, or animal, is it not in keeping with the order and constitution of things, that he should be destined—or predestined—to serve the same end in his higher moral and spiritual sphere? The Scriptures so affirm and the common sense concurs in the supposition.

Before we come to utilize these fundamental

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truths we must remind the thinker that such conclusions involve elements which he may have overlooked. They imply vastly more than at first appears, and when viewed in relation to moral government

THEY IMPLY PERIL.

It is apparent that whatever the purpose in the creation of a human race, moral character will have something to do with results. Every kingdom has within itself the elements of its own destruction. It is true of the physical, and it is eminently true of the moral and spiritual. And certainly the ultimate end of the creation of a moral being can not be achieved in defiance of moral law.

That man was created for such ends, placed under moral government and made amenable to moral law, and became part of the moral order and constitution of nature is all very plausible; but it would be presuming too much to conclude that therefore the end of his creation would be assured.

If man was a machine, or an animal, or even such a being that his conduct would be the product of the forces and agencies of his environment, and his character conditioned by them, some certainty of results might be predicated: But he is none of these. He is an “I am,” and free within the

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sphere of his consciousness to be obedient or disobedient; and hence liable to the consequences of vitiated and corrupt moral character. In brief, a free moral agent can not be subjected to the terms of certainty either as to conduct or character. Elements of contingency enter the moment his freedom of choice is affirmed. There can be no moral government without freedom, and freedom involves peril.

Some things are necessitated by the very “nature of things.” Some are contingent by their own constitution. For instance: Integrity of character—or holiness—is necessary to the fruition of moral being, and the ultimate end of man’s creation. Upon the issues of character depend the utility of his being to glorify a Holy God and achieve the destiny for which he was originally purposed and created. Even civil government requires a degree of loyalty and obedience to law that its ends may be usefully served. It is therefore necessary to the pre-intended destiny of man that his moral character be not perverted. That it may be perverted is a contingency residing in his liberty; and the creation of such beings is fraught with peril from the beginning.

Where there is no certainty in the nature of the entity created, how can the creator be certain

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that his product will not bring disgrace rather than glory to his name?

It is easy to see that a race of holy beings—if necessitated—would reflect honor and glory upon their author. But impossible that a race of beings, if made free, should certainly do so. The ultimate ends of creation can not be attained without that virtue of moral character which men call goodness, and goodness in a free being is the product of his choice. Necessitated goodness is not a virtue. Necessitated badness is not a moral vice. Doubtless angels and men were created in the divine image, but if created free they may cease to be like God and become bad, and thus defeat the divine purpose; or, as announced in the New Testament, “come short of the glory of God.” Freedom involves peril.

The only peril in the universe of being is inherent in liberty of choice. If therefore integrity of moral character, or goodness, or holiness is an essential qualification for the achievement of the divine purpose, then the creation of free beings involves the possibility of defeat. And when such beings abuse their liberty, and by the law of cause and effect become perverse in character, the purpose of their high calling is defeated. It is the difference between a palatial structure of vast pro-

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portions finished and furnished, erect and magnificent, ready for occupancy, and the same great pile a melancholy ruin; or if not a ruin in all its proportions, condemned for human habitation.

Integrity of character, or holiness, being an essential qualification, not merely to well being but to continued place and calling in the moral government of God, *no subordinate utility can be served by a perverted being.* For anything less than a moral end is outside of a moral realm and belongs to things and not to moral beings. If therefore man is a sinner, and thus perverted, or depraved, the end of his being is not merely in peril, it is rendered impossible. Hence, in perfect alignment with this truth, the meaning of the word SIN in the Hebrew is “to miss the mark.” And the penalty for sin is no less than death. Failure, running back to the pre-intended purpose, and forward to the ultimate end of his destiny, leaves no utility to be served, and the forfeiture of life is the only logical sequence of moral law as originally declared by the great Creator and Lawgiver.

Humanly speaking, but two possible things are open to the divine economy. Destruction or reconstruction. But, let us not anticipate alternatives with the Infinite. We know that man is a sinner; and here seems to exist a dilemma. For,

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if our conclusions be true, then it follows that when God said, “let us make” another “I am,” He took a great risk, and when His creation fell by transgression He faced a dilemma involving not only the doom of His creatures but the discredit of a ruined enterprise. Will He declare His righteousness by executing the penalty of death? And if man is immortal, perpetuate the memorial of a failure by an eternal death? Or will He atone for the loss by creating another man? If so, the new man must be similarly endowed with liberty to be a subject of moral government; and if less the image of his Maker than the first, the disparity would discredit the experiment throughout the imminency of moral being.

Then, too, if the great Architect shall repeat His creations, how often must He do so? And how long would it be until He should succeed in making a man—thus free—who will prove to be impervious to the temptations of Satan, render perfect obedience to moral law, and thus meet the conditions of a holy character, and render to God the glory which the perfection of his moral being and the achievement of his holy calling was predestined to secure? How long?

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REDEMPTION.

The facts, as we know them, and our logic, fairly applied to the problem in hand, has driven us to these conclusions, and we have tentatively applied to the Supreme Being a jumble of human weakness and divine wisdom. God is not a man that He should take risks, make mistakes, and face the alternatives of a dilemma. He inhabiteth eternity. Time from either extreme is equally known to Him. We must review our conclusions when they charge God with such limitations. Though our logic be faultless, and we know how to estimate liberty and peril, sin and ruin, we do not know what God can do or will do. Our only resort in such case is the authority of His Word. And though men may discredit the inspiration of the Scriptures, it is only a fair rule of criticism that on such a subject—a doctrine of the Scriptures—they should be admitted to state the whole case. Therefore, in view of that authority we ask the question,

WHAT DID THE SUPREME BEING DO TO REMEDY
THE RUIN OF A FALLEN RACE?

Did He abandon His purpose, and blot with oblivion the work of His hands? No. Did He change the plan of moral government and reconstruct His

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creation? No. He did neither of the two things, which our logic led us to surmise was open to the divine economy. He held to His purpose and reaffirmed it. The seed of the woman shall bruise his head, etc., Gen. 3:15.

The reason so many thinkers “do not understand the atonement” is because they read only half the story of the creation. The other half antedates the “beginning” of Moses, and dates from “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4, and 1 Pet. 1:20). Moses had to begin somewhere, so he began at the beginning of the heavens and the earth. St. Paul goes back to “The eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3:11). St. John goes back still further and declares that, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). In the third verse he adds, with reference to the Word who was in the beginning with God, “All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.” St. Paul ascribes the creation to Him in these words, “For by Him were all things created, that are in the heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is

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before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Col. 1:16, 17).

Some thinkers stop with the cosmogony of Genesis, and because they do not find any medium between the Infinite and the cosmos they give us Pantheism. Here, and in many other passages, the New Testament writers supply that medium in the person of the only begotten Son of God, and not only so, but so as to identify His mediation with both creation and redemption.

Here are depths which no man may sound. But could it be otherwise and be true? Is it not rational to suppose that the Supreme Being took no risks in the inauguration of free moral government, and that from the beginning He provided against the inherent peril of freedom through His only begotten Son? For whatever else may be true of the impenetrable depths of His eternal purpose and the vast amplitude of His works, we have the plainest warrant for saying that before God would create a world like this, and people it with its immortal millions and subject them to the awful perils and terrible contingencies of moral government He foreordained a Redeemer.

Otherwise the righteousness of God would be impeached, His eternal purpose imperiled, and measureless interests made to depend upon the

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volution of His finite creatures. No! No! Eternal blessings on His name! He took no such risk. He provided a Redeemer, the safeguard of all the contingencies of moral government; the surety for the conduct, the character, and the ultimate destiny of man. And He did this without violating or infringing the principle of liberty, either in moral government or in the proffer of salvation to man.

In perfect harmony with the divine character, and all the requirements of a providential system, fitted into His natural creation, evenly balanced as the poise of His planets, and vast and intricate as the stellar mechanism.

Is it not the plain declaration of the New Testament fairly interpreted, and its probability a fair inference, that the Logos is not only the Mediator between God and man, but the medium between God and nature? If some of our philosophers will not heed the voice of this revelation and persist in giving us Monism or Dualism, or some other logical form of Pantheism, because perchance they can not find a missing conjunctiva between the Absolute and the finite, we point to the eternal WORD and appeal to the fairness of the common sense in its interpretation.

Is it not reasonable, since the mechanical of

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nature is inferior to the moral of the divine government, that the latter should take precedence in the divine purpose and provision? The Bible so affirms, and since the eternal Logos is the *sine qua non* (the without which not) of the human creation, is it not reasonable that He should likewise be the same medial Agent of the material cosmos, and the Mediator of all created intelligences?

Moses caught a glimpse of the coming One; but the full-orbed splendor of the “Sun of Righteousness” never rose above the summit of Sinai. St. Paul exults in the glory of this mystery more than once. Speaking of his “knowledge of the mystery of Christ” (Eph. 3), he declares that “by revelation He made known the mystery,” “the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenlies might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God. According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (verses 9-11). (See the same in Rom. 16:25; Col. 1:27.)

That the world was created for a purpose:
That the purpose included a holy human race,
to the glory of His grace and wisdom and power:

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That the world was not created until He had provided against the peril of human freedom, the Lamb of God being conceptually slain before the foundation of the world, is the uniform testimony of Paul, Peter, and John, in such passages as already quoted and many others—notably in the following specimens: First, in 2 Tim. 1:9, “Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” Second, in 1 Pet. 1:18, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot. Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world.” Third, in Rev. 13:8, “The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

RELEVANT QUERIES.—In the study of the redemption a thousand queries start up here and there as we pass along. Here are heights and depths for angelic penetration. Much has not been revealed beyond what affects our immortal concern. We are considering the divine conduct with reference to the law and the cross, and our theology must be grounded on what is revealed and what we are privileged to know. Theological

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posies might gratify our fancy, but they will not endure a critical frost. We are warned against “intruding into those things which we have not seen” (Col. 2:18), and an age-long silence waits the answer to many of our questions.

What will become of the many derelicts of the human species? How is the great atonement related to the character and destiny of heathen millions? What destiny awaits the savage unregenerate or the dwarfed and gnarled and perverted of heredity? How many seeds of nature’s sowing perish in wind and wave, and how few perpetuate the life imparted by ancestral gift or improve the moral sense “which lighteth every man that cometh into the world?” We do not know.

Of a few fundamental truths that are in their nature organic and inherent in the order and constitution of moral government we are assured by revelation and by the confirmation of common sense. Whoever has the interest to inquire concerning these gives proof of a corresponding accountability to them, and this is enough to warn us of a destiny that waits on our treatment of them.

What of other worlds and of other orders of being? They must be moral beings, and be the subjects of moral government with all its contin-

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gencies and perils? Angels announced the Savior's birth, attended His ministry, watched the sepulcher, and waited to welcome His return to the heavens. "Ascending and descending on the Son of man," they are seen by prophets and apostles engaged in ministering to the saints, and numberless as the stars they are employed in all the great drama of John's apocalypse, promoting the mediatorial kingdom; and when Jesus comes again, attending His triumphant return all the holy angels will be seen trampling the clouds of the sky. They are not only deeply interested in redemption, but vitally concerned and constantly employed.

In the great circuit of moral government, from Michael and his angels, who "overcame the dragon and his angels" by the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 12:11), down to the bruising of Satan's head, the mighty mystery runs.

Some texts sound like the opening of the doors of perdition when Satan is doomed; others like the approach of a bannered host to celebrate the Redeemer's triumph. It is written of Christ that He died that "through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14),

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and whatever else is meant by the reference, we do know that the only effectual bruising Satan's kingdom on earth has ever had came through the gospel of the Son of God.

Another text declares that, "Having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things to Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven" (Col. 1:20). And another, "Having spoiled principalities and powers, making a show of them openly." Thus His redemptive glory pervades all kingdoms, concerns and employs all intelligences, precedes and transcends nature, and dates from "the eternal purpose."

CHAPTER XVIII.

DEEP THINGS VERSUS THE CHILDREN.

HEIGHT and depth beyond the reach of all our appliances confront us in the study of nature; and shall we reject the gospel of the living Word because it transcends all our reckoning? It is just like God to put a measureless meaning into what He has done and said. That grace and nature were originally and organically related in the divine counsels, that all things emanate from Him, “by Him consist,” and are ultimately to be “headed up in Christ” are matters of frequent reference in the New Testament.

Both in his Gospel and in his first Epistle John strikes this chord at the very first. He avers that this Word which was with God and was God, was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He was made flesh, and He came to His own (things), and His own (persons) received Him not. The first Epistle starts with “That which was from the beginning” and it closes with “Little children keep yourselves

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from idols.” The little children never stumble at the divinity of Jesus, if the theologians do. They believe in Him, if the philosophers will not.

Unlike Paul, whose style is the oratorical, with climaxes at the end, John starts in the heavens and comes down to the comprehension of the babes in Christ.

St. Paul, in one of those passages “hard to understand,” identifies the fate of nature with the fortunes of the redeemed, when he says, “We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, and not only so, but ourselves also . . . waiting for the redemption of our body.” (See Rom. 8:22, 23.) Creation waits on the manifestation of the sons of God, and great redemption consummated will include not only the heavens and the earth, but a “new heavens and a new earth.”

No wonder the old prophets of Israel, wrapped in the inspiration of a divine mystery, “inquired and searched diligently concerning what or what manner of time the Spirit which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow.” And though the mystery which was so long “hid in God” is now revealed to us, the wonder grows with the revelation. In the great future it will

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be of transcendent interest to know some of the many things which now are hid from us by the light that envelops them or the darkness that covers us: but here and now, leaning against the pillar of some great promise, and looking up, we would not exchange what we know of the fate of one little child we loved and lost back in the days of a desolate home and a broken heart for all the wisdom and knowledge of arch-angel-ology. For whatever relation the angels sustain to the "first-born," and whatever their peril and dependence on the Mediator, is not the promise to us and our children? And are they not born under a charter of eternal life and a covenant of redemption sealed by the blood of the Lamb? Before æonic times, before a being breathed or a planet burned, the eternal purpose took them in. They may droop and die, but angels watch their parting breath and bear their deathless spirits to the bosom of God, to enter upon their inheritance of an eternal, pre-intended birthright.

Jesus Christ Himself has said that "it is not your Father's good pleasure that one of these little ones should perish," and between them and an offender He has lifted the shield of an awful retribution. When we remember that wide over the world and all along the years a great majority

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of all that are born perish before they reach the period of accountability, it adds new meaning to the story of the ninety and nine and immeasurable interest to the words, “of such is the Kingdom of heaven.” We are urged to lay up our treasure there; but is not heaven the sweeter for knowing that you have a child in heaven that never sinned? And who would not become as a little child to enter?

Here again we are confronted with another problem. If the end of trial in this our present probation is the development of character, and character is destiny, how are the little ones to be developed without so much as “a trial of faith?” Well, ’t is true that many of them were here so short a time that they may not know they were born on earth. Heaven is home to them. But may it not be that people who stay at home will outnumber those who go to war, and that we mortals are but a small part of that great family of God, with heaven the metropolis and our out-lying world but a small part of His dominions?

If there are orders and ranks and series of intelligences other than ours, as the Bible affirms, and their environment is suited to their powers and adapted to their growth and development; if angels and archangels can reach the perfection

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of their being and glorify God without the discipline of trial, surely the little ones, earth-born and translated to their company, can reach the same celestial goal.

Because conditions of trial are employed to develop character here, it by no means follows that the same conditions are essential to moral integrity and the perfection of being with other orders in a spiritual world. For surely neither a tempting Satan nor an experience in sin is essential either to the fruition of moral being or the glory of God.

True it is that adversity becomes the occasion for the divine interposition, and the atonement of Christ with all the providential means employed for the redemption and recovery of the lost reveals the mercy and manifests the love of God as nothing else could. And the fact that integrity of character or holiness persists and develops through all the ordeals of probation and becomes godlike—loving what God loves and hating what God hates—must be credited to a degree of grace not needed by unfallen spirits; and in the end no doubt will be fitted for employment and engaged in ministries of peculiar honor and great glory. Did not an apostle say, “Know ye not that we shall judge angels?” (1 Cor. 6:3.)

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On the other hand; it may be that our ideals are distorted by the perspective of conflict which ages of war and bloodshed have produced. Let us shake off the stupor of it, and contemplate the possibility of a better way. Can not the God of peace perfect His creatures without the aid of such an environment, and lift the millions of little children, who died but never sinned, to as high a plane of destiny as any of those who had to be forgiven to enter the Kingdom?

The death and resurrection of Christ consummated an investiture of authority and power, and His qualifications as Redeemer of the race assure to them that whatever of injury was entailed by sin found its remedy in Him, “through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant,” which is the charter of eternal life to them.

Everything in nature is on a stretch for the perfection of its being. Even the tiny creatures that wing their flight to the destiny of a day, glorify God: And would you ask of the infant spirit in its upward flight, “Whither bound, little child, whither bound?” Even the daisies that grow on its grave, as they struggle up through the dark ground in search of the sun, will give the right answer, “Bound for the perfection of its being and the glory of God!”

CHAPTER XIX.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH. ASPECTS OF FAITH.
ATONEMENT IS MADE. FAITH EFFICIENT.

MEN would have us view the Christ historically and limit His work to the facts and incidents of His life. They would give us no broader view of redemption than the disciples had up to the time they forsook Him and fled; and then with no saving significance allowed to the types and symbols of the Old Testament, we are permitted to behold the Man. His death was but a martyrdom to the truth and an exemplary lesson in the general field of historic providence.

In keeping with this minimized method, the Scriptures are shorn of divine inspiration, the gospel of the supernatural, Christ of His divinity, sin of its turpitude, and the atonement of its vicarious merit as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. After thus eviscerating the New Testament of its sublime evangelical doctrines, one would think that little was left but the binding of the book. But that would be a mistake, because enough of the nomenclature is left to give it the

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appearance of life and the prestige of an ethical religion.

It is answer enough to affirm that the gospel of the apostles is not built on that scale, and the mighty tide of transformation that swept through the first three centuries and is now rising to the evangelization of the nations, had its beginning with a crucified, risen, and glorified Redeemer. It was when Jesus said “It is finished” that the veil of the temple was rent from the top and the old covenant fell a wreck between two dispensations. It was the startling testimony of eye-witnesses declaring that Jesus is risen from the dead that gave Pentecost its heart-convicted thousands. It was the ascended and glorified Christ who kept His promise and sent the fiery baptism, first on that Upper Room and later on every Church founded by apostolic hands. With a background of history running through the centuries and strewn with bleeding and blazing altars, and with the Old Testament sacrifices as familiar to them as our hymn-books are to us, they needed but to remember the words of Jesus to understand that He was the God-sent Messiah and the atoning Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world.

Stirring and sublime as had been the ministry and miracles of Jesus, His death had palsied their

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rising faith and made the thought of Him a tantalizing grief. Their hopes lay buried in His tomb; the sky was clouded and the night was dark and every tongue was dumb. But now, His resurrection succeeding the crucifixion and surmounting all the glorious manifestations of Israel's God, the transition made midnight noon and not only restored to their faith the immortal memories of the ministry of Jesus, confirmed His divinity, and invested the cross with the glory of an atonement, but made it the sacred emblem of the glad tidings.

During the period of His detention on earth and before His ascension, He taught them "of the things concerning Himself" and gave them the great commission.

They believed in Jesus as we believe in the sun. Then, girded by the energy of a divine afflatus, and gifted with power to preach a gospel which they knew was the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, they threw themselves into the conflict nerved to suffer any fate if only they could live and die for Him. The death and resurrection of Jesus was the theme of every sermon. (See the record.) They gloried only in the cross. They believed, and we believe, that Jesus tasted death for every man and that His

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death and resurrection and ascension consummated the most stupendous miracle of time or eternity.

Is it any wonder that such faith and such experiences, together with the assurance of the presence of our Lord walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks, projected a world-wide wave across the centuries and that Christianity counts her martyrs and her millions yet?

Every effect must have an adequate cause. When Columbus sailed into the mouth of the Orinoco River, somebody said that he had discovered an island. "An island," said he; "no, indeed; no such mighty torrent of waters ever came from an island!"

The same gospel that struck the heathen oracles dumb and brought idolatry to the dust is just as efficient to-day, and there are more golden candlesticks and more tongues of fire, and more probability that the reformatory forces of Christianity will win their way in all the world than at any period of time since Jesus said to His disciples, "Go."

God has a physical government in which His worlds complete their progressive orbits according to the laws of planetary motion. He has likewise a moral and a providential government. And,

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though the providential is fitted into the moral and therefore limited by the contingencies of human liberty, the ultimate ends sought by the divine purpose are none the less sure. (Liberty renders them contingent, but limitless time avails to make them sure.) Not all things seem to work together for good in His Kingdom; but the ultimate end will be good.

It is as if an artificer should make an instrument to keep time, and the wheels that turn backward contribute as much to the ultimate end as the wheels that turn forward. As students of the divine economy we are not sufficiently advanced to “tell the time of day,” but we do know that since “ ‘t was midnight on Olive’s brow” the hands on the dial have moved and are moving on toward the high noon of a glorious day. Periods of phenomenal progress and others of moral and spiritual retrogression have marked the path of Christianity from the first. What is termed the Dark Ages was a period devoid of progress and unproductive of men. What could be more dreadful than a thousand years of darkness! And what were the causes that led to this appalling state of things? We reply, chiefly because the Church lost out of its life the experimental, and substituted ritualism for evangelism; and it is to be

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feared that when the Church lapses into formalism, another age-long night awaits the world.

The tendency to ridicule revivals and to relegate conscious personal salvation to the realm of vagary and mysticism, and to glorify modern ethical ideals instead of the God-honored methods of repentance and justification by faith is a sad and mistaken trend towards the gulf in which Christianity was buried for a thousand years.

The prosperity of modern nations began to dawn with the Reformation, and only by the promotion of a spiritual evangelism will civil and religious liberty be promoted and the political world be advanced. God has so linked the progress of the Kingdom of Christ with the prosperity of the nations that the one can not be promoted without similar benefit to the others.

Is it doubted? We appeal to the pages of profane history. Witnesses are not wanting from among those who wrote it and were not disposed to afford Christianity more credit than was due. Even Thomas Paine, whose fame as the friend of civil liberty would have been perpetuated had he not added to the zeal of the patriot the mistaken notions of the skeptic, wrote these words: "The event that served more than any other to break the first link in this long chain of despotic

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ignorance is that known by the name of the Reformation by Luther. From that time, though it does not appear to have been any part of the intention of Luther, or of those who are called Reformers, the sciences began to revive, and liberality, their natural associate, began to appear."¹¹

If the reverse of such results prove the same relation between things spiritual and temporal, we have only to cite the French Revolution, and to remind the thinker that Atheism never held the reins of government but once, and that was a Reign of Terror. Her reformers began destroying religion and ended by destroying each other. It was not till the head of Robespierre rolled off the block and her victims numbered millions, that her guilty greed was sated.

Lift the shadow of a divine hand from off the hearts of men and the stability of constitutions and statutes has disappeared, giving place to anarchy, whose implements are blood and fire and death.

Our institutions of civil and religious liberty are dear to us; but if we forsake the God of our fathers, that vast valley that stretches between the Blue Ridge and the Rocky Mountains may become the grave of a Republic, and the woe that

¹¹"The Age of Reason," Part I, p. 54, Ed. 1834.

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awaits our children's children will duplicate the tyranny of the Middle Ages and the terrors of anarchy. For there is a God "that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and the fourth generations."

What was the secret of the Reformation under Luther. Every reader knows that the cornerstone of the Reformation was the doctrine of

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

To prove the truth of which a considerable part of the New Testament was originally written. We have not space to recite the thrilling story of Martin Luther's conversion; nor to trace the sequel of that great text, "The just by faith shall live." Not penance, but repentance; not works, but faith became the gospel cry, and the pulpit, which had been silenced for five hundred years, spoke again; and ere long the world "saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

In that great epitome of the plan of redemption recorded in the third chapter of Romans,

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St. Paul wove "the faith of Jesus Christ" into every other verse. "A propitiation through faith in His blood," "just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus," "justified by faith without the deeds of the law" are the terms employed. He does not give us as much light on the nature and the extent of the atonement in its relation to those who are rendered irresponsible, or those of orders other than human, as perhaps our curiosity would suggest. His message is addressed primarily to the free, accountable creatures of moral government, to whom the gospel is sent. Elsewhere the truth incidental to these various phases of redemption receives attention; but here he makes sure that to us the salvation of the gospel of Christ, grounded on the propitiation, is made efficient by faith; and the rest of the Book of Romans is devoted to the proof of it.

How could the righteous God provide a remedy for sinful men and ignore their liberty? If men are free to fall, are they not free to remain fallen? And what is the faith required but a voluntary acceptance of Jesus Christ and the completed redemption which He has provided?

Both in the Old Testament and in the New faith is made to bulk more than any virtue man can render in obedience to the law of God. In the

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Old faith is employed chiefly in the sense of fidelity; and in the New Testament its initial office is the reception of Christ and the things of His gospel.

Faith—*fides*—is exhibited in many aspects: fidelity, con-fiding, con-fidence, con-fidant, con-fidential, etc., with the emphasis on the root of the word, covers the whole duty of man, not only in his relation to God, but to men. The gospel method of salvation is true to the nature of man and things, though it be original and unique. That it is by faith because it is free is the testimony of the Word itself; “it is by faith that it might be by grace.” Not only is it freely provided, but it is proffered to free moral beings; and the only way for a free being to receive a free gift is to take it. Hence the benefits of the atonement of Christ, though they are priceless beyond the reckoning of men or angels, and reach from the eternal purpose to the illimitable destinies of immortality and eternal life, are made available to every accountable human being “by faith.”²

²Repentance, which is not mentioned by St. Paul in this immediate connection, is presumed in all his foregoing argument; and it must be presumed in every case of the man who is eligible to the justification proffered, “through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.” True to the nature of things, God can not justify the man who continues in rebellion against Him. His refusal to surrender himself and his sins is an effectual bar to his eligibility as a believer.

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Skeptics betray their ignorance of faith as a condition of salvation every time they argue against it. They assume that the New Testament makes faith more of a virtue than good works, which is not the truth. It is doubtful if the faith of a Christian is any more a virtue, ethically considered, than the faith of a heathen. The heathen exhibits all the credulous devotion of a heart-faith in his worship of an idol. If therefore faith, *per se*, was a rewardable virtue, he would be equally commended and his faith rewarded with the experience of a personal salvation.

That which gives the faith of a Christian its virtue is its object: namely, Jesus Christ. Faith is only the taking hold of Christ with hearty reliance for salvation through Him. It is the empty hand that grasps an object, and the reward is the object itself. In the nature of things, we can not take hold of Christ by works; but by faith. Heathen faith takes hold of a wooden god. Mohammedan faith takes hold of Mohammed. Christian faith takes hold of Christ. A wooden god is a thing. Mohammed is dead. Christ is “mighty to save.” Therein is the difference.

Faith is not such an imperial virtue of itself; but it is very particular and very important. It is

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like the coupling-link between the train and the engine. It is the engine that makes the train go, and not the coupling. If the poor heathen couples his heart to a tree, or the proud philosopher couples his soul to a system of thought, the faith of either must abide by the consequences of his choice.

What the atonement effected by the removal of every legal bar to our salvation was so nearly the consummation of that salvation that all that was left to be consummated was made to depend upon the volition of free moral agents; hence it is termed “the reconciliation.” “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” “And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation” (“*καταλλαγή*”).

God is no more reconciled to sin and sinners since the offering of Christ than before, but every principle of righteousness, every interest of moral government, and everything in heaven and earth which existed as a bar to the proffer of salvation to sinners was reconciled thereto by the death of Jesus Christ. It only remains that we surrender to God and receive Christ in obedience to His

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command to repent and believe the gospel, to perfect that reconciliation between God and us.

In keeping with this truth St. Paul concludes his reference to the reconciliation by saying, "Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (Rom. 5:10, 11, and 18).

If, therefore, justification is a free gift, how can it be received but by faith?

Men recognize the fact that something must be done to reconcile them to God, and every penitent, in ignorance of the fact that an atonement has been made, or in defiance of the conditions involved, goes about the making of an atonement for his own sins. First, by an effort to quit sinning: A feat which no sinner ever yet achieved, and in which he of course lamentably fails. If he keeps on he may lodge somewhere within the experiences of the seventh chapter of Romans. He will never get to the first verse of the eighth chapter until he quits trying to save himself and trusts One who is able to save to the uttermost all them who come to God by Him. Second, by penance and good works; which are commendable, but neither efficient nor sufficient. Men forget that

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salvation costs infinitely more than they are able to pay, and that the suffering has been endured, the blood has been shed, and Jesus Christ has offered Himself through the Eternal Spirit without spot to God. And having obtained eternal redemption for us, our eligibility to all the accruing benefits of His death, resurrection, and life depends on our being sinners and not on our becoming saints.

“Will do better” is often an apology for having done worse. It is the endless round of sinning and repenting; but it makes no progress. Like the running of a belt on two wheels: the sides seem to be running in opposite directions, but both are stationary. When the wheels run down they stop.

Reformation is a good thing, just in proportion as persistence in a wrong course is a bad thing. But it is not the thing which comes first as a cause and condition of justification. The New Testament method of transformation accords with both fact and philosophy in demanding that first things come first. Make the tree good and the fruit will be good.

He has had little experience in spiritual things who does not know that faith is not merely an act, but an attitude. In that attitude which God

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has made conditional for the reception of either sunlight or salvation the vital rays pour down upon us when we assume it, and just as long as we choose to remain in it. There is a period of transition; whether it be in a moment or a month, which no mortal can fully comprehend. Jesus said of it, "Thou canst not tell."

A little child can not comprehend the processes of photography, and does not know that in the twentieth part of one second about nine thousand nine hundred miles of light prints his image on the sensitive plate: but he ought to know enough to sit still and look pleasant.

God's purpose with reference to His children is that "they be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8: 29). And, with all the authority of the New Testament, confirmed by the testimony of all those who have tried it, we ought to know enough to assume the right attitude for sinners, and thus get into the path and adopt the plan that God has provided. And when we do, "God who has caused the light to shine out of darkness will shine in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Further pursuit of this theme does not lie in our plan: But it is well to note that many of

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God's dear children are too prone to dwell in the state that belongs to the penitent instead of pushing on to a joyous experience; and if a hint of the truth with reference to their source of trouble will not shock their sense of moderation, we would like to say that a minute of faith is worth more than a million years of trying to be what we are not.

CHAPTER XX.

RECAPITULATION. THE CLIMACTIC "COME."

"And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." —(REV. 22: 17).

We have not aimed to give the doctrinal phases of the atonement equal treatment, but rather to lay a foundation by proving the necessity for an atonement. That is the burden of this treatise, as we believe it ought to be the aim of the pulpit in presenting this theme. The atonement of Christ as a fact is the thing of transcendent moment. The rest is incidental and of relative importance.

Of all that we have written this is the sum: The immutable Jehovah, the habitation of whose throne is justice and judgment, could not pardon sin or proceed to the amelioration of human conditions without an atonement. First, Because of what He is. It would involve complicity or compromise, and contradict principles of righteousness upon which the divine administration rests.

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Second, Because the demerit of sin demands the total and irremedial retribution of death.

The same principle which in human governments render pardon impossible (except as a corrective measure) applies with infinite force and absolute certainty in the government of God. He can not justify sinners without justifying sin. Between the mercy sought to be manifested in the pardon of sin and the justice of which the law is the exponent and rule of action there is an irreparable conflict.

Men better versed in literature than in law and steeped in the Christian charity of which the cross is the source may talk and write divinely of the infinite love of God and yet be blind to this awful problem. But there is a problem. And not only so; when we come to view the suffering, want, anguish, and mortality to which poor humanity has been subjected, with the innocent suffering more than the guilty, but for a divine revelation making sin the reason, the great, dark problem of evil is enough to impeach the goodness of God forever.

Eternal verities—as freedom, truth, justice, love, and mercy—as truly limit the exercise of the divine prerogatives as time and space, matter and mind; and to affirm that God can pardon sin

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without a propitiation is to ignore both the righteousness of God and the heinousness of sin.

The “holy, holy, holy,” of Cherubim and Seraphim, and the inapproachable light in which He dwells all along up the infinite deep proclaim Him without variableness or shadow of turning. And when from Him goes forth “a fiery law”—law for angels and for men—it is holy law; “holy, just, and good.”

That law declared obedience or death. Death, whatever else it may involve, is deprivation of life. As if the righteousness of God, the well-being of His creatures, and the eternal moral order of the universe demanded the extinction of any thing and the extermination of any being that ceased to be holy. (True, nonentity is impossible to immortal beings, and perhaps to matter itself, but the one may be excluded from the life of holy beings and the other be subjected to the alembic of consuming fire.)

Obedience or death sounds harsh to our lax and untrained ears: But it is not harsh. It is the eternal rule of right, which in the nature of things has no use or employment or purpose for discord. We are told that the ancients employed the figure of an imperfect curve, a leaning column, or a note of discord to represent sin. Sin and

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death are related as cause and effect; and all other effects less than death are but incidental to the one final retribution. Therefore, to assume that the Supreme Being will extend any other treatment than the law announces, either to obedience or to disobedience, is to assume without warrant that His love and beneficence is greater than His righteousness—an evident absurdity. First make it right or righteous to exercise the prerogative of clemency, then beneficence may be exerted to the limit, or without other limit than is imposed by repentance, including restitution, faith, or whatever the good of the individual or the interests of public justice require. Otherwise clemency has no ground on which to stand, and the Supreme Being can not deny Himself.

We agree with St. Paul in prefacing the atonement with “the righteousness of God.” Not only in the preface, but in the brief epitome given in the third chapter of Romans, verses 21-26, he uses the phrase four times in the six verses. “The righteousness of God,” to every sinful being an awful declaration, and to every other the anchorage of eternal security, above the reach and beyond the ravages of sin and death and hell, is the ground and reason for the atonement of Jesus Christ.

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The cross declared and exhibited the righteousness of God as nothing else could have done—not even the perdition of the first offender and the wreck of the original creation. It reconciled every opposing principle of righteousness; removed every legal barrier; met and secured the conflicting interests of moral government and justified the act of divine clemency in extending mercy to sinful men, conditioned only on their acceptance of the proffered gift.

The modern view, that all punishment is designed only to benefit the guilty, is a monstrous perversion of truth. The amelioration and reformation of offenders is a dictate of mercy, and only so far as it affects the public good is it the office of justice. Atonement or penalty is the only declaration of just law.

The stand we have taken with reference to the necessity for the atonement will harmonize with any theory of a vicarious atonement, whether it be a Satisfaction Theory or a Governmental. In defining the nature of the atonement we can not accept a theory which limits the atonement to the elect, nor one that insures the eternal salvation of the incorrigible, as a penal satisfaction theory seems logically to do.

Nor can we be satisfied with a governmental

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theory which does not sufficiently emphasize the satisfaction rendered to justice. If we limit our definition to rectoral justice, we must enlarge the word to take in the idea of justice as a principle and not merely justice as an expedient. For, as we have seen, it was not merely expedient that Jesus should die for the sins of the whole world: It was necessary—that God might be just and the Justifier.

FREEDOM; AND THE CLIMACTERIC INVITATION.

Freedom is the *sine qua non* of moral government. A single syllable of coercion would not only defeat the ultimate ends of moral government, but destroy it, by reducing it to a physical government. God reigns; but He does not so reign as to either violate principles of righteousness or defeat the ends of moral government. Hence, without any impeachment of the divine character or His administration of a providential government, Satan reigns and bad men are often in authority, contingencies occur, and the world is governed (not by law, but) according to law. All this without contradiction; because moral agents are free.

It is in view of this fact of freedom that the

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salvation of this world was a stupendous problem.

To devise a plan of redemption that would harmonize with freedom, and therefore to suffer the opposition of bad men and devils; to render its acceptance optional with every moral agent, and yet so related to the providential government of God that it will compass the destruction of infernal powers, win the world to Christ, and repair the damage of sin and death without a word of compulsion.

This is a big world; and when we remember that Christ proposes to win the world by wooing it, the wonder grows. Men say twenty-five thousand miles round, and think they have measured it. But, step it off. Better yet: build its bridges, railroads, steamships, telegraphs, schools, colleges, universities, and churches. Banish its ignorance, superstitions, and hoary abominations; and blaze the way for the institutions of civil and religious liberty. Then you begin to measure the world.

Archimedes, that arch mathematician, justly famous for his genius and his many inventions, added to them the lever; and he is said to have boasted that, with a place to stand and a fulcrum on which to rest his lever, he could lift the earth.

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Little did he comprehend the magnitude of such an undertaking.

A modern astronomer has figured out the problem; and we are told that the length of the arms of the lever and the weights at either end must be reciprocal. The fulcrum would have to be nine thousand miles from the earth, and the long arm of the lever extend into space twelve quadrillions of miles. Then, if Archimedes would fall as swift as a cannon ball for twenty trillions of years, he would lift the earth—one inch!

The moral world is vastly greater than the material. It does not swing out unanchored into space, but is held in the grip of a mightier gravitation. No part of it has ever been lifted the fraction of an inch where the gospel lever has not been applied.

To lift it requires the breaking of chains. Appetite and passion, tyranny and slavery, organized selfishness and bloody war are so many cables that moor it down and must be sundered.

But it does move! With the cross for a lever, the pulpit and press for a fulcrum, and good men and women and little children tugging away at the load, one by one the hoary old links are letting go: And the time will come when the reformatory forces of Christianity will give to the

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nations of the earth the blessings of civil and religious liberty, and the triumphs predicted of the gospel of Christ will usher in the Millennial morn.

It takes time! Because men are free! And in view of the fact that love, not force, is the power applied, and every worker is a volunteer, the lifting of this world out of darkness into light will be, when done, the most stupendous miracle of eternity!

COME!

We began this treatise by appealing to the authority of the New Testament; we conclude by imitating its example. The last paragraph of the Book of Revelation contains not only a promise of the second coming of Christ, but an invitation. That He will come the second time, without a sin offering, to consummate His triumph and our redemption is an oft-repeated declaration; but here is an invitation, both to His coming and to us, coupled with a response—"Behold! I come quickly."

It is as if "the angel" of inspiration (22:16), casting one glance upward, inviting His return, then facing the millions for whom Christ died, had added another invitation to the world-wide welcome of the gospel: "The Spirit and the

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Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."

As an invitation it is both cumulative and climactic. It crowns the mercy of Divine Providence and vindicates His justice by another and final appeal to the free agency of man. It sweeps from the universe the last vestige of complaint against the justice of God; pours the river of life within the reach of every perishing mortal, and places him where by his own volition he becomes the arbiter of destiny for life or for death eternal.

If after this any poor mortal is deluded by the fear that he is reprobated to be lost, let him put the matter to the test by coming to Christ. The whole New Testament system of grace is built in recognition of human liberty, including every provision, every promise, and every appeal, and it was a climax of design that this great "whosoever will" should close the Apocalypse.

Then, as if to guard the sacredness of this invitation, a flaming two-edged sword is placed in the same paragraph. "If any man shall add to these things, God shall add unto him the plagues written in this book. And if any man shall take

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away from the words of the book, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city.”

“Redemption through His blood” began to date “before the foundation of the world,” and when it has completed the circuit of time, gathered in its mighty sweep all those who would, lost none but those who would not, the resurrected right hand millions will receive another invitation.

Crowning the accomplishment of redemption there is to be another Come: limited, mandatory, triumphant. It consummates the eternal purpose. On that day, after the lapse of probationary centuries, the voice of inspiration that accompanied the harp of Isaiah when he sang, “Ho, every one that thirsts, come to the waters, come;” and the come, come, repeated so often to the millions of earth’s sinning and sorrowing children by a succession of prophets and preachers, shall be blended and transmitted to the skies; and the thunder of its welcome repeated from the throne of the Redeemer.

Come, ye blessed. Come from the North and the South, and from the East and the West of every land and all the ages. Come, from the toil and tears and temptations. Come, ye; enter this

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Paradise, begun before Eden began to bloom or its bowers were spread for man. It was prepared for you!

Welcome to its fields and trees and many mansions. Welcome to its freedom, and all the joys for which you lived and suffered and died—in vain. Angels, principalities, and powers will greet you. God Himself says, Come. Leave your graves and come. Come to the measureless immensities of an immortal glory. Enter in through the gates; while the elder children of eternity and all the elect of other worlds thunder their applause. Blazoned in immortal registry your names are “written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8).

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